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CHRISTIANITY

AND

THE CHURCH:

BY THE

REV. CHARLES CONSTANTINE PISE, D. D.

Author of "Aletheia," "St. Ignatius and his First Companions," "Zenosius," "Father Rowland," etc. etc.

"CEDAT CURIOSITAS FIDEI."

Tertull. de Præscript.

LET CURIOSITY YIELD TO FAITH.

BALTIMORE:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURPHY & CO.

No. 178 MARKET STREET.

PITTSBURG: GEORGE QUIGLEY.

Sold by the principal Catholic Booksellers throughout the United States.

1850.

BT121
.P55

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TO THE

MEMORY OF ARCHBISHOP MARÉCHAL.

My venerable Friend! whom, while on earth,
In my life's morn, I loved, as loved, of yore,
Augustine Ambrose,—if this tome have worth,
To thy blest memory I inscribe it; for,
Thou wast my early Patron; thou didst pour
The sacred unction on my youthful head,
Upon my brows thy hallowed hands did spread,
And mark the eternal character thereon
Of sacred ordination: thou didst smile,
Like a dear Father on me—as a Son—
And thy most gentle care embraced me, while
Heaven lent thee to the Church: thou, now, art gone
To join the Carrolls in the realms above;
But in my heart abides the memory of thy love.

PREFACE.

I HAVE now concluded a work, of which, for a long time, the idea, scheme, and plan, occupied my mind; but from which, hitherto, I necessarily shrank, not having, within my reach, the materials requisite for its execution. At length, however, the elegant and elaborate volume of Louis Lahure* fell into my hands, which, without farther labor or delay, I could turn to profit, and which enabled me to spread before the American reader, in our own tongue, the copious and well-chosen excerpts from the most famous philosophers and writers, in vindication of Christianity, and the dogmas and morality of the Catholic Church.

The investigation to which this volume invites the reader, is not a matter of indifference, especially in the present age. This truth has been admitted by the deepest thinkers. The once great De Lamennais has treated it in an "Essay" which ranks as a *chef d'œuvre* in Catholic literature, and places its author at the head of a Christian school, from which went forth a Lacordaire, a Gerbet, a

* *Le Christianisme et les Philosophes.*

Montalambert, and others, who, while they derive from its founder all the splendor of their fame, and the grandeur of their success, are doomed, meanwhile, to deplore his precipitate fall, like that of a modern Tertullian. But the arguments, principles, truth, and wisdom of that Essay still remain to achieve, despite the subsequent inconsistencies of its author, the triumphs of the heavenly cause it vindicates, and adorns.

Voltaire, when his mind reflected on the importance of religion (which he so fatally derided, in his moods of levity or chagrin) declared, that the representations and works of the stage were mere amusements: the principal study of man is that which occupies us least. Very few persons take the trouble to examine whence they come, where they are, why they are, and what is to become of them. Most of those who pass as men of common sense are not above children: and when they grow old, they are abandoned to themselves, and find old age imbecile and contemptible. Doubt, fear, weakness, poison their declining days. *

Again: "I cannot, at my age, accustom myself to the indifference and levity, with which persons of wit treat the only thing necessary,—the truth of the Christian religion. . . . Say what you may, the thing well deserves the trouble of an investigation."†

* *Tome* 69, 95. † *Edit. de Kehl, Tom.* 81, *p.* 3.

In another place, he goes still farther, and affirms, "that every father of a family should rear a posterity acquainted with the Gospel, imbued with the great truths its teaches. . . ." *

He concludes, that "Religion demands, absolutely, the attention of every honest man. He who passes his time in the midst of vain pleasures is a fool, and unworthy to live. How can they treat with so much indifference and levity religion, the only essential thing?" †

In the following pages the reader will find brought together, in a brief and miscellaneous manner, a number of important topics, worthy his profound investigation, and serious study. I have endeavored, with the materials in my hands, to make it as comprehensive as it is varied. I take to myself little merit in the performance, having only imitated the industry of the bee, in passing from flower to flower, in the blooming gardens of literature and philosophy, which the art and genius of a hundred polished minds had laid out and cultivated, years ago.

* *Tom.* 34, *p.* 175. † *Tom.* 36, *p.* 296.

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CHRISTIANITY AND THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD — ATHEISM — MATERIALISM — DEISM — THEISM.

THE foundation of all Religion is the belief in the existence of the Supreme Being; the incomprehensible ONE; the Alpha and Omega; without beginning, without end; the Omnipotent Creator, and all-wise Ruler, of the Universe. By His word, all things were made; they could not have sprung of themselves from nothing into being. They must consequently have had an author—an Eternal Cause, whose fiat produced them out of nothing. That first great cause is God.

"Dependent creatures from the Eternal spring;
Things, that we see, did not themselves create:
Look round on earth, on air, on sea,—on sky
Where, day and night, such glittering lights shine out—
Observe the order of the seasons, view
The planets, as they burn, and, then, confess
The mighty hand by which all these were made."

We name that Supreme and Almighty Being, God: He called himself by the sublime appellation of: I AM WHO AM. Should man push his inquiries farther? If he presumed to do so, his brain would become confused, his judgment darkened, and folly take possession of his intellect. This, Rousseau has eloquently acknowledged, in his *Emile:* "The incomprehensible Being who embraces all things, who gives motion to the earth, and framed the system of existence, is neither visible to our eyes, nor palpable to our touch: He defies all our senses. The workmanship is manifest, but the Maker is concealed. It is, then, no trifling matter, to know that He exists. And when we have reached this point, and ask ourselves who He is, our minds become confounded, they wander, and we know not what to think. He is as mysterious to my understanding as hidden to my senses: the more I think of Him, the more bewildered do I grow."

And yet, do not the Heavens and the Earth proclaim the glory of God? It is true His nature is incomprehensible, because a chaos separates our intelligence from His immensity. Nevertheless reason can read His being in the works of Nature, can see Him represented, faintly, indeed, still faithfully, in the wonderful pictures of crea-

tion that surround us; that sublime creation of men, animals, plants, &c.

The science of mathematics has discovered the cause of the motion of the stars, of which it can apprehend the direction, and perceive the limits. Here ends the power of that science: and here admiration begins, enthusiasm is fired; while we acknowledge the infinite wisdom and intelligence by which the laws of the Universe are governed. We behold those laws, and exclaim with a Poet:

"Without a law-giver there is no law."

Physical science analyzes the nature of man, and discovers that it is two-fold: when one is dissolved, the other is not destroyed.

"Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei
Vitabit Libitinam." *(Horace.)*

All of me will not die: my better part
Will not be stricken by Death's gloomy dart.

The Atheist denies that a Supreme Being exists: but he cannot prove his negation. All he can effect is to create doubts and misgivings. The Christian is not seduced by such arts: he is naturally led to believe in God, and feels that he has been made not to understand his Creator, but to love him. This belief is innate; for there is

no rational being, who does not pronounce, in his native idiom, the word GOD.

Of all the systems, materialism is the most absurd. Could man create himself? Could the floating atoms of chaos constitute the principle of creation? Could creation be the result of chance? Man is an intelligent being, active, free: therefore his intelligence, action, and freedom must emanate from One who possesses those attributes of Himself, essentially, eternally.

The theories of modern materialists are derived from the ancient: they present nothing novel. They have been handed down from Epicurus, Pythagoras, Pliny, Petronius, and others. These men were the masters of Hobbes, Spinosa, Machiavel. Yet, Philosophers of recent date, who lead the van of skepticism, do not fail to pronounce the word GOD, as frequently, at least, as Christian writers: but with this difference, that the former yielding, in pronouncing it, to an innate sentiment, and an onthological certitude, pronounce it, indeed—but blaspheme it; while the latter, expressing their profound convictions of their utter dependency on His power and goodness, bless and adore it.

Deism is the absence and negation of Religion, inasmuch as it cuts off all communication with

Heaven, divine revelation, and supernatural light. This system reduces man to the level of the brute: because it denies the action of Providence, and, consequently, future accountability.

Theism consists in the belief of as much of Christianity as is conformable to human reason. It is an eclectic system recognizing in God unity of nature, but not trinity of persons: in man, an immaterial soul, but incapable of enjoying ineffable felicity: in nature, a Providence governing the Universe and requiring a worship, but a worship of any sect; and while He commands virtue and forbids vice, will neither reward the one or punish the other. How different this erroneous idea of Providence from that so admirably sung by Racine, in his *Athalie:*

"That God the master of the Earth and Skies,
Is not what error figures to our eyes:
The Eternal is His name, the world's vast plan
He framed—the sorrows of the humble man
Whom the earth outrages He marks on high;
With equal laws all mortals he will try,
And from His heavenly throne, with awful power,
Interrogate the kings of earth ————."

Christianity teaches us, that God has made all things for His own glory, which He will not suffer to be arrogated by any other. Man is endowed

with intelligence to know, admire, adore Him, and with a will to love and obey Him.

To dwell longer on the existence of God would be an unnecessary task. "He is a Being," writes St. Gregory of Nazianzen,* "above all other beings. What tongue may name Him, of whom no language can convey an idea?"

"Do you wish me to prove the existence of God by the testimony of the senses?" asks Tertullian.† "Well; though imprisoned in the flesh, trammelled by a thousand prejudices, weakened by passion and concupiscence, a slave to false divinities, the soul, when she recovers, as it were, from a fit of intoxication, or from some malady, and regains her health, proclaims God, and invokes Him under an appropriate name: *Great* God! *Good* God! These words emanate from the mouths of all men. O testimony of the soul naturally Christian!"‡

"You will enquire," says St. Chrysostom,§ "how, before books were written, God taught men to know Him. How? By the very means by which we have led you to a knowledge of that Supreme Being. We have walked with you, in

* Lib. 1. † *Apol.* cap. xviii.

‡ *O testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ!*

§ *Serm. I, in Gen.*

Spirit, over the entire theatre of the Universe; we have shewn you the heavens, the earth, the sea, the fields, the woods, the riches and varieties of Nature; we have gone back to the very elements of the different productions, and, at the sight of all these wonders, raising our voices together, we have cried out in the transports of our admiration: *How great are thy works, O Lord! how unfathomable thy designs.*"

"What would be the condition of men!" exclaims VOLTAIRE,* "had they to study astronomy and physics in order to arrive at the knowledge of God! He who has created us all should be manifest to all, and the most common proofs of His existence are the best, for the very reason that they are common. We want eyes only, and not Algebra, to see the day. . . . God has placed within our reach all that is necessary for our wants: the certitude of His existence is our greatest want. He has given us ample aid to satisfy it.

"The ancient argument: *I exist, therefore some cause has existed from eternity*, is a divine emanator from reason. . . . Nothing is grander or more simple. The same proposition is, also, clearly demonstrated by arithmetic and geometry. It may, for a moment, astound the inattentive

* *Letter to the King of Prussia*, l. 34.

mind: but it invariably subdues it, a moment after. For, the instant we reflect, we evidently see, that if nothing existed from Eternity, every thing would have been produced by nothing. Our existence would have had no cause: which is an absurd contradiction. If a mere house built on the earth, or a ship that makes the round of this little globe, on the seas, proves clearly the existence of a mechanic who constructed them, to know that there is a God, I desire one only thing: open your eyes, and you will know and adore a God. . . . . .

"A beautiful palace proclaims its architect. The arrangement of the Universe, the immensity of space, in a word, this incomprehensible fabric proclaims a sovereign architect, intelligent, almighty, eternal.*

"I say with Plato: you believe that I have intelligence, because you perceive order in my actions, connexion, and an end. There is a thousand times more in the arrangement of the world. Judge then, whether the world be not regulated by a supreme Intelligence. Atheists wield against us all the arguments of Strabo and Lucretius. We answer in one word: you exist, therefore there is a God."

* Vol. 69, page 463.

EPICURUS does not hesitate to style "the Divinity a spiritual Being, all-powerful, Creator and Preserver of the Universe and all things, which He moves and directs, according to the laws of His infinite wisdom."

"As soon as men become capable of reasoning," writes D'ALEMBERT, "they acknowledge a God."* And LA BRUYERE: "I feel that there is a God, and I do not feel that there is none. This is sufficient. All the reasoning in the world is unnecessary for me. I conclude that God exists; this conclusion is in my nature. I received these principles too naturally in my childhood, I have preserved them since, too naturally, in a more advanced age, to suspect them of fallacy. Yet, there are minds who disregard these principles . . . these are monsters."†

"It is certain," says Rousseau,‡ "that all things announce One Intelligence. That Being who moves the Universe I call God. To this name I join power, will, and goodness. I know, most certainly, that He exists of Himself, and that my existence is subordinate to His. I perceive God in all His works. I feel Him within myself, I see Him all around me: but as soon as I attempt to contemplate Him in Himself, He eludes my effort!"

* *Encyclop. Art.* DIEU. † *Caract.* ESPRITS FORTS. ‡ *Emile.*

Again: "Sovereign Power of the Universe! Being of beings, be propitious to me. Cast on me an eye of commiseration. . . . Behold my heart, . . . I place all my confidence in Thy infinite goodness, and it will be my care to occupy myself in considering Thy immensity, Thy grandeur, and Thy eternity."*

"With the conviction of the Divinity" (BERNARDIN DE S. PIERRE) "every thing is grand, noble, invincible, in the obscurest life: without it, all is weak, displeasing, and bitter, in the bosom of grandeur."†

* *Confess.* † *Etudes de La Nature.*

CHAPTER II.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

What would God be, if His wisdom did not provide for the Creation which His omnipotence called forth from nothing! With regard to rational creatures, the views of Providence are, that they fulfil their duties towards God, and towards their fellow-beings. This is their mission here; this alone will fit them for unspeakable delights, hereafter, in Heaven.

On their hearts has been impressed, by the hands of the Creator, a love for the beautiful, resulting from social harmony, tending to moral good—the source of happiness and repose for the soul.

As soon as the existence of God is admitted, His Providence must be confessed. All nature cries out, that He watches over his works, over the birds, that make the groves resonant with their sweet lays; over the trees, that are clad with leaves, and loaded with fruit; over the fields, yellow with the waving harvest; over the stars that glitter in their pristine beauty and order, in the firmament, and over the deep that even now

obeys his mandate, as when its limits were first traced out upon its shores.

The Pagans themselves admitted a Providence. For they were convinced that they could not make use of their reason, in knowing God, without, at the same time, acknowledging that He watches over the world He has created. In confirmation of this, I might quote Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, Plato, Virgil, Architas, Demophila, the Cumœan Sybil, Livy, &c. &c.

The Indians, Celts, Egyptians, Ethiopians, Chaldeans, and, in general, all nations, have believed in this dogma, although some ancient Philosophers—among others, Democritus, Strabo, and Lucian—have turned it into ridicule.

Modern Philosophers, skeptical as many of them are on religious points, agree with the wise men of antiquity, in admitting a Providence.

"It is impossible," says D'ALEMBERT,* "—as the Pagans as well as Christians have felt—that society could exist without the belief in an Invisible Power, that governs the affairs of human kind."

"The dogma of Providence is so sacred," adds VOLTAIRE,† "so necessary to the happiness of mankind, that no honest man should doubt of a

* *Encyclop.* Atheism. † *Dict. Philosoph.*—Preface.

They, likewise, preside over the invisible world, and execute God's will with regard to men. Lactantius has said that "God has sent his Angels to guard and, as it were, cultivate the human race."*

They watch over empires, people, the church, and every individual. "The Angels," remarks ORIGEN again, "have charge of our souls, which are confided to their care, as guardians have charge of their wards."† Eusebius of Cæsarea says: "We have learned from the Scripture that each one of us has an Angel whom God has given to guide us."‡ And St. Jerome: "The dignity of our souls is so great, that from our birth, to each one of us is assigned a guardian Angel."§ "As smoke," writes St. Basil, "puts bees to flight, and a bad smell, doves: in like manner sin causes the Angel that has care of us, to fly."

I will conclude this chapter with a beautiful quotation from LAMARTINE:

"God rises up, and suddenly there stands
A faithful minister of His commands,
Obedient to his awful summons—bright
And pure that spirit, destined to shed light

* Lib. ii, *de Instit. Div.*
† *Hom.* viii.
‡ *Prep. Ev.*, c. vii.
§ In *Matth.* xviii.

the belief of all the Doctors that the air between Heaven and Earth is peopled with evil spirits. St. Paul, St. Jude, and St. Peter teach, that our struggle is not with flesh and blood, but with Principalities and Powers, and the spirits of darkness crowding the air.

The number of good Angels is far greater than that of the bad. The Bible counts them by myriads of millions: and St. Denis, the Areopagyte, St. John Damascene, and St. Thomas, in accordance with the Bible, have ranked the Angelic Hierarchy in the following grades: The first comprehends the Thrones, the Cherubim and the Seraphim. The second, the Powers, Virtues and Dominations. The third, the Angels, Archangels and Principalities.

The good Angels enjoy the intuitive vision of God, and preside over the government of the visible world. "The Angels," writes ORIGEN, "preside over the visible things of the Earth: air, fire, water; that is to say, the principal elements: over animals, and the Stars of Heaven. Their ministry is divided. Some have charge of the productions of the earth: others of rivers and fountains: some preside over the winds, and others over the sea."*

* *Hom.* viii.

and his high dignity as a creature of God. It is the act of a free being, who, imagining that he is sufficient for himself, denies the necessity of the aid of his Maker. This shews the source of the temptation of our first parents, who, like the Angels, endowed with liberty, should have rejected their own arguments and propositions, and have remained faithful to the commands of God. But abusing their free will, they were led into the way of evil. They had heard the menace of death in case they should taste the forbidden fruit. They now listen to the suggestions of the tempter, that instead of incurring death, they shall be made like unto God, by virtue of that apple. They chose to be guided by the latter, and seduced by a lie, they fell into sin.

God permits the fallen Angels to tempt men, that they who resist them may merit everlasting glory. All may resist, because to all are given graces necessary to withstand all temptations. Without this choice left to man, and without these continual trials, what would be the value of free will? St. Chrysostom states as his opinion that these Angels attack even those whom they have no hope of conquering, for the mere purpose of harassing, troubling, and fatiguing them.* It is

* Hom. *de Lazaro.*

terns, like the Kings of the earth, whose power is bounded: and a God, who, making all things and being all-powerful, honors his creatures by associating them, *when he pleases*, *and after the manner he pleases*, with his action."

The Angels do not comprehend, more than we do, the Divine Nature. They have only the power to determine, themselves, the consciousness of their power. They can say: *I am, and I am what I am: I will, and I know that I will.* Like men, they have free will, and they could resist God, and with the greater efficiency of will, because they know they are Immortal. The act of liberty by which the Angel decides whether he will live a life of God, or otherwise, is the proof through which he must pass. In the first case, the life of an Angel, deriving aliment from the divine source, will develop itself with energy: hence his beauty, glory, felicity. In the second, the divine spark which he possesses, being inextinguishable, will become a fierce flame, a burning desire, and be like the hungry worm that devours and constantly reproduces itself. This has been the case with the fallen Angels.

It is abundantly proved that evil is not the effect of the weakness, and imperfections of the creature; but rather a proof of his strength, power,

CHAPTER IV.

ANGELS.

THE word Angel signifies a *messenger*, an *ambassador*, or *one sent*. The peculiar names of the Angels denote their especial ministry. Michael signifies *like unto God*, Gabriel *strength of God*, Lucifer *the bearer of light*. On account of the nature of their functions, they are represented as having wings. We are told, by the Bible, that God, in order to make known his will to men in the ancient Testament, to guide his servants on their journeys, and give them virtuous wives, made use of the ministry of Angels. It represents the Good Angels struggling with the Evil, and informs us that some of them have taken the name of God : *Elohim*, and even *Jehovah*.

Will it therefore, be said, that the Angels have as much power as God? That their power is more to be feared than God's, since God, who is infinitely good, wills and confers nothing but happiness upon his creatures? This objection has been confuted by Bossuet: "there is," he says, "an infinite difference between acknowledging, as the Pagans, a God, whose action cannot extend to all, or who has need of the assistance of subal-

should have been discovered things more durable than our bones; utensils, for instance, which, produced by the hands of men, would have attested his ancient existence, and primitive industry, how rude soever might have been the results of it. Should some physical revolution destroy, to-day, the organized beings on the surface of the earth; when things would have returned to their natural state, new creatures would people its surface: and if our ruins were to disappear by a general dissolution, there would, nevertheless, be found among the sediments formed by the ruins of the human race, our instruments of iron or brass, our money and our hammered stones, which would testify that we had once lived. . . . Nothing is, then, eternal on the earth. Everything, as well in the entrails of the globe as on its surface, attests a beginning, and indicates an end."

language correspond with the sublimity of his subject—and, in this, would only have shewn his weakness. The Divine Wisdom who played in the creation of the world, narrates the fact without emotion. . . . We are marvelously astonished from the beginning of the Bible to the end. What can compare with the opening of Genesis? That simplicity of language, naturally the reverse of the magnificence of the facts, appears to us as the highest effort of genius."

And CUVIER again: "Some pretend that the world is eternal: that it has always been, as it now is, and shall ever continue thus to be. Others imagine that the world is not more ancient than man, whose existence on the globe goes back about six thousand five hundred and fifty-five years. Both of these opinions are equally erroneous. It suffices only to examine the external strata of the globe, to be convinced that they are formed by a great number of others placed one upon another, and to see that these contain petrified bones and plants, and each *stratum*, or rather each formation, presents fossils which are proper to it.

"In those *strata* no human bones are found. It is no longer permitted to believe in the existence of human fossils. Before discovering them, there

ians, Chinese, and Hindoos: and they pretended, too, that the narrative of Moses was in contradiction to the Science of Geology. Impiety, triumphant, for a time, on this as well as other points of revelation, has, ultimately, been beaten down completely by modern Science. "All the efforts of mind and science," remarks the profound CUVIER,* "to prove the high antiquity of the Zodiacs of Denderah and Esnch have become superfluous, since, finishing where naturally they should have begun, had not prejudice blinded the first observers, the Greek inscriptions engraven on monuments have been copied and restored. It is now certain that the Egyptian temples in which the Zodiacs were inscribed, were constructed under the domination of the Romans."

Hence Sir WILLIAM JONES has affirmed, "that the Chronology of Moses and that of the Egyptians are in perfect accordance."†

With regard to the books of Moses themselves, their style is as grand as their narrative is true. But it is the grandeur of simplicity. "What writer, having to speak of great things," says ROLLIN, "ever commenced like Moses? What majesty, and, at the same time, what simplicity! An ordinary man would have labored to make his

* *Disc. Sur les Recol.* † *Asiatic Researches.*

and rend the air with their harmonious songs. He said: "Let us make man to our own image;" and the Lord of Creation stood up in his beauty and grandeur, his heart heaving with affections, his mind beaming with intelligence, and his soul adorned with freedom.

"The Creator, having, from all eternity, resolved to send his Son upon the Earth," writes HUMBERT,* "and bestow on him a body capable of the noblest operations, has made our body the image of that of the man-God, who is our eldest brother, our prototype, our original. Behold the dignity of our origin, with regard to the body. Do you form a proper idea of its nobility? You should treat it with respect and honor; why do you debase it by a life unworthy of what you are?"

Moses, a man inspired by God, and sent, clothed with the power of working astounding miracles, informs us of the order with which all parts of the creation were formed. Following his chronology, in the Septuagint, the creation of man traces back only seven thousand years. This date was attacked, with inexorable fury, by the skeptics of the last century. They contended that the chronology of Moses was at variance with that of the Egypt-

* *Pensées sur la Verite de la Rélig.*, c. iii.

CHAPTER III.

THE CREATION.

Man cannot fix his eyes upon the firmament spangled with stars, upon the earth embellished with the flowers of spring, or covered with the rich harvests of summer; upon the deep, whose waves are sometimes roused by the spirit of the tempest, sometimes at rest in calm tranquillity, without recognising an Eternal Principle, that animates, preserves, and vivifies the whole.

Before treating of the teachings of Christianity, the knowledge of religion, the relations between God and his creatures, let us cast a retrospective glance upon the first effects of the Divine Power —the general creation.

Although this Creation surpasses the weak powers of human intelligence, which never can comprehend how all things could emerge from nothing into existence, nevertheless, we must admit, that the Omnipotent breath of the Eternal infused fecundity into nothing. He said: "Let there be light." He bade the Sun shoot forth his beams from the East and bathe the Earth in their splendors. He commanded the birds to leap into being

Admirably has Cousin argued, that "the inevitable fate of virtue, in this world, is suffering. Take away suffering, and there is no resignation, no humanity, no virtue, no sublime moral. We are condemned to suffering, because we cannot be virtuous but by the sacrifice of sensuality to moral reason. If there were no physical evils, there could be no moral devotion, and this world would be ill adapted to the destination of man. The accidental disorders of the physical world and the unforeseen evils that result from them, are not disorders and evils independent of the power and goodness of God. He not only permits, but wills them. He wills that there should be in the physical world, for man, a great number of subjects of pain, in order that there may be for him a great many occasions of resignation and courage. . . . Suffering is good, because it turns to the profit of virtue; and because whatever gives to moral liberty more energy, whatever serves to give a greater moral development to the human species, is good."

truth which can do no harm in any case, and which cannot but be productive of good. We do not regard the Providence of God as a system, but a thing demonstrated to reasonable minds."

BAYLE well remarks: "God has given us existence; this is a favor we owe his bounty. We are bound to do our equals all possible good, because our power is limited: we cannot, without an absurdity, oblige God to do his creatures all the good He can, because He is infinite."*

And MONTESQUIEU: "If there is a God, He must, necessarily, be just: otherwise, He would be the worst and most imperfect of all beings. On this ground it follows, that if there be a hell in the hearts of the wicked here, there must be a hell hereafter."†

"Providence!" cries out ROUSSEAU,‡ "treasure of the poor, resource of the wretched! He who feels and knows thy holy laws, and confides in them, he whose heart is at peace, and whose body does not suffer, thanks to thee, is not wholly subdued by adversity. In spite of all the machinations of men, and the success of the wicked, he cannot be altogether miserable. Stript of all the goods of the earth, by cruel hands, Hope in the future sustains him."

*Pensés sur la Comète. †Lettres Pers. ‡Dialog. Tom 2.

And succor on our race, on wings of fire
To waft our prayers to heaven—to inspire
With holy thought our souls—and keep, with care,
Unceasing watch upon our bodies here.
Each mortal hath his own: that Angel fair,
That friend invisible watches round his heart,
Inspires, and guides it—from it plucks the dart
Which may transfix it, and relieves its doom—
He hovers o'er the crib and stands beside the tomb,
And bearing in his hands the soul set free,
Presents it, trembling, to the Deity.'"

CHAPTER V.

THE BIBLE.

ADAM and Eve, from the period of their creation, received from God an innate knowledge of the love, gratitude, and adoration due to their Maker: and, moreover, all the graces necessary to attain the end for which they were brought into existence. But, making a bad use of their free will, they overturned all the economy of God's designs in their regard.

Men, having rejected the worship of the Supreme Being, fell into idolatry. In order to remedy this evil, God chose a people, to whom, after their captivity in Egypt, He gave a written law, which subsisted until the coming of Jesus Christ, who, in its stead, substituted the Law of Grace, which is to continue to the end of time.

The salvation of men, from the beginning, was the result of their faith in the Messiah who was to appear on earth; and from the epoch of His ministry, no one can be saved except by faith in Him, and through the efficacy of His name.

These three propositions being admitted, it is not difficult to understand, in a general manner,

what is meant by Religion, viz: the link which binds man to God—the companionship of the creature with the Creator.

That Christianity dates from the birth of the world, St. AUGUSTINE testifies: "What we call the Christian Religion existed among the Ancients, and has never ceased to exist from the commencement of the human race to the moment when Christ came in the flesh, from whom, religion that always existed, assumed the name of the Christian Religion."

Such is the antiquity of our Religion: which, far from shrinking from the meridian light, courts it, and invites to an investigation of her character, nay commands it. If she feels herself outraged by the blasphemy of unbelievers, she does not consider herself honored by a stupid credulity. The disciples of the Gospel are not like the followers of the Koran. Religion is founded on truths divinely revealed, of which the Books of Moses are the depositories: on miracles wrought by the Prophets to prove their heavenly mission: on the sublime teachings of the Scripture, so holy and perfect that God alone could be their author.

These prophecies have been so faithfully accomplished, that were we not certain of their an-

tiquity, we would suppose that they were uttered after the events they predict. Thus the prophecy of Daniel, pronounced five hundred years before its accomplishment, could never be satisfactorily proved to be false.

The Christian founds his Faith upon the admitted authority of the sacred Scriptures, and of the Church, which has, during the space of eighteen hundred years, spread throughout the world the word of God, and opens her bosom to all who seek a refuge in it.

Religion has always been one and the same: she is immutable. There can be but one true and divine Religion, because there is but one God. Christianity is the development, the perfection, of Judaism. The ancient Law was but a preparation for the new. It is necessary to unite the two alliances in one and the same idea, to comprehend anything of the perfection, the riches, and divine plan, relative to the salvation of the human race. In fine, Christianity is a magnificent chain of which the last link is in our hands, and the first attached to the throne of the Eternal.

Although times have changed; and the mystery of redemption once announced as to be, is now accomplished, Faith has not, therefore, changed. Before the coming of Christ, true reli-

gion was practised under other names, and symbols, than at present: in a manner more veiled and obscure, than under the full light of the Sun that hath arisen from on high; nevertheless, there has been but one only Religion.

The promise made by God, in the origin of the world, immediately after man's fall in Paradise, that of the woman should be born a son *who should crush the serpent's head*, was perpetuated during the forty ages that elapsed between that event and the birth of the Messiah. In this the only hope of mankind was fixed. That Son, Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, was signalized by characteristics which could not be mistaken, designated in the Bible, and pointed out by the Prophets. The ancient Testament was the figure of Christ and the Church, as we are told by St. Paul.

The authenticity of the prophecies is so clear, that the most ardent enemies of Religion have been compelled to avow that they are striking, and extraordinary. In effect, from the beginning of the world, God announced, as we have seen, the Messiah. He promised Him to Abraham, and the Prophets traced the faithful picture of his life. They mention His eternal generation, proclaimed Him a man-*God*, designated the place of

his birth, foretold the adoration of the Magi, His flight into Egypt, and his return to Nazareth. They depicted his virtues, spoke, with enthusiasm, of his miracles, and did not fear to tell of his suffering and death. They sang of His resurrection and ascension: the rejection of the Jews, the vocation of the Gentiles, the establishment of the Church on the ruins of the Synagogue. In vain have the Jews attempted to re-organize their nation. In vain did Julian, the Apostate, essay to falsify the declaration of the Holy Scriptures, to rebuild the Temple, and immolate new victims. All was useless. Nature itself seemed armed against that enterprise, overturned his project; and the Jews were left in the condition in which he found them.

It is, then, clearly demonstrated, that all the Scriptures and prophecies, all the revolutions of the political world, all the laws and ceremonies of the first alliance, announced and prefigured Jesus Christ. In Adam, He was the father of a holy posterity; in Abel, the Innocent One, the Martyr; in Noah, the Repairer of the human race; in Abraham, the Blessed; in Melchisedeck, the Sovereign Priest; in Isaac, the voluntary Victim; in Jacob, the Chief of the elect; in Joseph, the Meek One, sold by his brethren; in Moses, the

Pilgrim, and Fugitive, the Powerful in works, the Legislator. In Job, the Sufferer, the Abandoned; in David, the Conqueror and King of nations; in Solomon, the Builder of the new temple; in Jonas, the Entombed and the Risen. The tables of the law, the manna of the desert, the fiery pillar, the brazen serpent, were all symbols of his prerogatives and glory.

Does not the analogy that exists between the Old Testament and the New prove, even miraculously, the pre-existence of Catholicity?* "All knowledge of Religion," remarks St. Augustine, "consists properly in the knowledge of the two Adams: what we have inherited from the first, and received from the other. Nature fallen in Adam, Nature repaired in Jesus Christ; this is the sum of Religion. All the economy of the visible or invisible world, whether anterior or subsequent to the creation, refers to the advent of Christ upon earth. The cross of Jesus: behold the centre around which all revolves, the compend of the history of the world."

All God's designs, conduct, counsels, all His promises and menaces, His laws and ceremonies, all the figures, prophecies, symbols of past times, as well as the foundation and destruction of Em-

* See Becanus' *Analog.*

pires, all centred in Jesus Christ, as their terminus and object. His religion descended from Heaven as soon as man began to breathe in Eden, and after the lapse of so many centuries, She is yet with the human race, teaching God's will and shedding blessings upon the world: influencing the happiness of man, not in a vague and undefined manner, but by penetrating the heart, and filling it with consolation and hope. She elevates sentiment, supports courage, inspires resignation amidst the adversities of life, fosters the presence of Him who scrutinizes the human conscience, and encourages and intimidates, by imparting spiritual joy, or awakening remorse.

True religion is the parent of pure morality, of justice, of order: and the enemy of despotism, fanaticism, and superstition.

In order to arrive at a more complete knowledge of Christianity, it will be necessary to consider the condition of the Jews, since its establishment.

Christ announced the ruin of Jerusalem in these words: "A stone shall not be left upon a stone."* And in another place: "For many will come in my name, saying: I am the Christ, and they will seduce many. . . . When therefore you shall see

* Matth. xiv.

the abomination of desolation standing in the Holy place, he that readeth let him understand. Then they that are in Judea let them flee to the mountains. . . . For there shall be great tribulation," &c.*

The incredulous Jews who remained in the city were massacred: those only who believed in Christ as the Messiah, returned to the town of Pella, and escaped the general calamity. "Christ," writes St. Chrysostom, "has built his Church on a rock; nothing can overturn it. He has destroyed the Temple; nothing can rebuild it. Nothing can throw down what God has erected: nothing can raise up what God has hurled down."†

The prophecies of Jacob, of Daniel, of Isaiah, of Aggæus and Micheas, have been accomplished. Jerusalem was destroyed, in the year 70, on the 8th of September, under Titus, the son of Vespasian. The sacrifices were abolished, the Temple entirely ruined, and the Jews dispersed without the hope of being restored to their native land.

With regard to Daniel's prophecy touching the Messiah, many objections have been urged as to the time when it should begin and end.

* Matth. xxiv. † *Orat.* 3.

Some compute the weeks from the first year of the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia: others from the twentieth, or from the seventh of that of Artaxerxes. But whatever may be the beginning or termination of those weeks of years, and not of days (each week contains seven years) the truth of the prophecy will be ever apparent; for, from the order given by Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign, A. M. 3551, to the epoch when Christ, began his preaching, in 4034, four hundred and eighty-three years had elapsed.

Josephus, an eye-witness, relates, in faithful and terrific terms, the History of the woes, famine, and final destruction of Jerusalem. St. Jerome, dwelling on this subject, thus apostrophises the unfortunate Jews: "What are you expecting, incredulous nation? Under the Judges, you committed many crimes: your idolatry made you the slave of the neighboring people: but God had pity on you and sent you Saviours. You multiplied your idolatries under the Kings; but the abominations into which you fell under Achaz and Manasses were punished only by seventy years of captivity. Cyrus came, and restored to you your country, your temple, and your sacrifices. At last you were trodden down by Vespasian and Titus. Fifty years after, Adrian completed

your extermination, and for four hundred years have you continued in oppression."*

The Sacred Books are those that have been written under Divine Inspiration, have defied the injuries of time, been handed down to our age, and comprise the Old and New Testaments.

By *Testament* is understood *attestation;* from the Latin word *testari.* The ancient contains all the works written before the birth of Christ, viz: the five books of Moses; Joshua; Judges; Ruth; four books of Kings; two of Paralipomenon, the first by Esdras, the second by Nehemiah; Tobias, Judith; Esther; Job; a hundred and fifty Psalms by David; Parables; Ecclesiastes; Canticle of Canticles; Ecclesiasticus; Jeremiah and Baruch; Ezekiel, Daniel; the ten minor Prophets: Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zachariah, Malachi; and the first and second books of Machabees.

These books are recognized as sacred: they form the Canon approved by the Church, in the Council of Trent, and conformably to the teaching of the greater part of the Holy Fathers of the five first centuries. This Canon was, likewise, approved by the Councils of Hippo and Car-

* *Ep. ad Dardan.*

thage, held in the years 397 and 419: declaring that "it had been received from their Fathers."

The Pentateuch—with the exception of the last chapter of Deuteronomy—was written by Moses. That chapter is attributed to Joshua. In attempting to sap their authenticity, Voltaire denies the existence of Moses, and founds his negation upon this reasoning: "The History of the Jews is the foundation of Pagan mythology; now, that mythology is false; therefore, the History of the Jews is false also."* Captious sophistry! as though it followed because fable is constructed out of facts, that the facts themselves are false! That Moses lived is attested by his writings, by the tradition and testimony of an entire and numerous people—the Jewish, as well as Pagan nations, the enemies of the Hebrews. Assyrians, Egyptians, Phenicians, Greeks and Romans unite in the admission of that fact.† The readers of Juvenal cannot but have noticed these lines:

> Judaicum addiscunt et servant, et metuunt jus,
> Tradidit arcano quodcunque volumine Moses.‡
>
> They learn, and keep, and fear the Jewish code
> Left them, by Moses, in his hidden tome.

* *Philosoph. de l'hist.*

† Josephus *contr. Appion.* Origen *Ap. contr. Cels.* Tacitus *App. i. v.* Dion Cassius, Pliny, &c. ‡ *Sat.* xiv.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PENTATEUCH.

We delight in refreshing our minds in the limpid fountains of evidence which never cease to flow from heavenly sources. Bathing in them, our souls come forth, not only filled with delightful and salutary influences, but likewise unsullied by any mental defilement, if, peradventure, in the midst of our contact with the skeptic and doubting world, any such should ever involuntarily have attached to them. With this view, I have proposed to throw together, in this chapter, some ideas on the "Law of the Law," the title given by the Jews to the books of Moses, or the Pentateuch. The subject naturally divides itself into two parts: first, the *contents* of the book, and, second, their *Divine inspiration.*

The name Pentateuch is derived from the heads or books into which the subject-matter has been divided, these being *five* in number. And every tyro in the Greek language has learned its derivation. On opening the sacred volume, we will at once perceive the titles and mark the collocation of these five books; namely, *Genesis*,

Exodus, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*. The ordinary reader of the Bible, in casting his eyes upon the fivefold division, would naturally be led to suppose that this division was made by the author himself in the original manuscripts. But such is not the case; the ancient Hebrews knew no such division,—which is mentioned, for the first time, by Josephus, in his famous "Antiquities." They designated the Pentateuch, as I observed just now, the "Law of the Law," or the "Book of the Law."

The Pentateuch is an authentic and inspired narrative of events connected with the establishment of religion, as they occurred from the era of the creation down to the death of the author, an unbroken and magnificent chain, of which the links are important and remarkable facts, through which the Providence of God can be visibly traced, and in all of which the finger of Jehovah is manifestly discerned.

The most important portion of the Pentateuch is the history of the Mosaic legislation. What precedes this may be regarded as a mere introduction or exordium; so intimately connected with it, however, that it is necessary to the whole, and therefore cannot be separated from it. Through it we are led, step by step, to the mighty drama

to which it is meant to conduct us; as through an introduction to some magnificent poem, or through the exordium to some sublime oration. We follow the graphic and inspired author from one scene to another, through varied fields and lonely solitudes, until at length, ere we are aware of the majesty that is to burst upon our vision, we find ourselves at the foot of the mountain clad with the awful glories of the Most High, quaking under his terrific thunder, and gleaming with the fearful flashes of his lightning, from the midst of which supernatural coruscations and uproar, the Decalogue is published to the people shuddering with awe in the valley below.

The Pentateuch may very naturally be divided into three parts. The first comprises the history of what occurred in the world from the period of its creation down to the death of the patriarch Joseph. And this part forms what is entitled *Genesis*, from the circumstance of its treating of the birth of things. The Hebrews call it *Beresith*, from the word with which it opens. It comprehends the space of two thousand three hundred and sixty-nine years. The second part contains the Mosaic legislation, which runs through Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. *Exodus* is so styled from the *going out* of the people of Israel

from the land of Egypt; it is denominated by the Hebrews *Veelle Semoth*, and occupies a term of one hundred and forty-five years. *Leviticus* derives its name from the Levites, because it treats of the offices and functions, rites and ceremonies, of the priests and Levites, and is called by the Hebrews, from the first word with which it begins, *Vaicra.* The name *Numbers* is derived from the contents of the book, namely, the numbering of the people; it is denominated by the Hebrews *Vaiedabber*, and extends through a cycle of about thirty-nine years. The third part is but the repetition of certain laws already given, and the addition of some new precepts, exhortations, and motives for the observance of the law already promulgated; hence its appellation,—*Deuteronomy*, and in Hebrew, *Elle Haddebarim.*

In the Pentateuch, there are four distinctive divisions of character, namely, history, religion, legislation, and poesy: history the most accurate and simply narrated; religion which reveals to the favored race of Israel a system Divine and authentic, raising them far above the position of the nations by whom they were surrounded, and marking them and their posterity as the true adorers of the only living God; legislation breathing a wisdom and adaptation to the peculiar cir-

cumstances of the people which proved the heavenly source from which it emanated, and the temporal blessings which it was intended to convey; and a poesy as far superior in beauty and sublimity to the most admired strain of the pagan muse as the spirit of prophecy is above the genius of human thought, or the fountains of inspiration are more grand, more deep, more bright, than the springs of human imagination.

Its history is the most ancient, certain, and interesting to mankind. It is the production of the proto-author, and therefore stands alone in the midst of the early years, telling of events and men and scenes which, had it not been for his hallowed style, must have been lost and buried and forgotten. No author whom he might cite preceded his era; on the contrary, during a long series of years, his was the only record, and a record which begins its date with the birth of creation, relates how man, the great parent of the human race, was formed, and in what manner the earth was peopled. Under the divine description of Moses, every thing speaks with a thrilling and marvellous interest, every thing bursts upon the reader with a fresh and glowing beauty and sublimity. Chaos seems in labor, the elements of matter coalesce, as it were, and assume a consis-

tency, which, by the omnipotence that brought them out of nothing, grows into form and symmetry, and palpitates with existence. The waters are separated from the dry land; the firmament is thrown like a pavilion over the earth; light flashes from the womb of darkness; the sun ascends his flaming throne, from which, as from an everlasting watch-tower in the heavens, he is destined to regulate the days, the hours, the years, as long as time shall endure. The deep is rolled into its vast and fathomless abysses, and its billows are chained within their prescribed boundaries, traced by the Eternal finger on the sands; the waters are alive with fishes; the fields and groves swarm with beasts and reptiles, and are resonant with the incessant songs of joyous birds. Eden is prepared, with its sweet and beautiful gardens, its limpid rivers and ever-blooming bowers, for the reception of the lord of the earth; and man, made after God's own image, standing erect, looking to the heavens of which he is destined to become an inhabitant, walks in majesty and dominion among the inferior animals. This is the character of the historic record of the Pentateuch.

Nor does the smallest shadow of uncertainty rest upon its accuracy or veracity. Both are

placed beyond the influence of doubt; both stand upon the authority of unquestionable truth. For, independently of the inspiration of its author, on every detail the characters of exact authenticity are visibly impressed. All the personages introduced upon the scene are mentioned by name; all the epochs are distinctly marked; all the events are intimately woven together,—like a chain, of which one link cannot be removed without causing the whole to break and fall to pieces. From Adam down to Noah, there is no interruption; both eras are inseparably united together by a tissue of epochs and characters and events. The first man whose raptured eye beheld the wonders of the new-formed universe, and the family which, after witnessing the bursting of the cataracts of heaven, was preserved to re-people the regenerated earth, seem to join hands, through an interval of two thousand years,—such is the unity of this record. Then, again, commences another concatenation, not less closely linked nor less uninterrupted, stretching down to the epoch of Moses, the legislator of the Jewish people, and the formation of the twelve tribes, the origin of the Mosaic legislation, and the entrance of the people of God into the land of Canaan; all which facts are incontestably authentic.

Nor can it be denied that these facts are, moreover, the most interesting to the human race. They teach us our own history, which, otherwise, would have been but a vague, and perhaps mythological, tradition, like that of the posterity of Confucius, or of the other pagan nations. We are made acquainted, with perfect accuracy and beyond all misgiving, with our wondrous origin, with the formation of the universe in which we are placed, with the common parent of our race, with the great catastrophe which overwhelmed in destruction nearly the whole of the human family,—a catastrophe to which the common tradition of all nations, the fictions of mythology, and the condition of the globe,—cut up into continent and island, vale and mountain, in all of which are discovered fossil and animal remains, which by no other theory could be accounted for,—render a striking and universal testimony. Compare the mythology of Deucalion with the history of Moses, and it will be evident that the former tradition is founded substantially upon the latter. The "*Deucalion unde homines nati, durum genus*," of Ovid, whence derived except from the event of the deluge as narrated by the inspired historian? from whose pen we also learn the manner in which the shattered earth was re-

paired, the heads and founders of the nations that afterwards spread anew over the face of the world, the account of the patriarch of the Hebrew people, their journeys in the desert, their legislation, and the prodigies and miracles which attested and confirmed the Divinity of the whole. Such is the nature of the historic part of the Pentateuch;—and could any thing be more interesting or more important to the human family?

The religious division of the Pentateuch displays to the mind a character manifestly divine, whether in regard to dogma or to morals; and of these two constituents all true religion, it will be confessed, is composed. These make known what man must believe in his relation to God, and how he must comport himself towards his fellow-beings. They consequently afford a double position, on which, as a believing people, we are to stand,—one eternal, the other temporal; one, like Jacob's ladder, reaching to heaven,—the other, like Israel's tents, spread on earth, and covering under their magnificent and beautiful expansion all the charities which should bind brethren together. In effect, what sublime ideas of the Divinity are not conveyed by the author of the Pentateuch,—ideas worthy the majesty of the Supreme Creator, and which, by their light and

glory, cast into impenetrable shade the most gorgeous conceits and fanciful apotheoses of the wisest and politest pagan theogonists? Only compare them, as they are left on record, whether in the loftiest strains of epos or ode, or in the elegant description of history, or in the romantic feats and triumphs of mythology. What are the "cloud-compelling" Zeus of the Greeks, or the demigods and penates of the Romans, when contrasted with the God of Moses,—one, omnipotent, eternal, whose fiat struck out matter from nothing,—who spoke and all things were made,—whose providence governs all the events of human life, whose infinite wisdom sounds the depths of the heart, unfathomable by any other power, who, in a word, by excellence, and by nature, IS? Nowhere, except in the Pentateuch, has any appellation been given to the Creator that conveys the smallest idea of grandeur and self-existence, when placed by the side of the name by which he characterizes himself,—I AM WHO AM, *Ego sum qui sum;* a name which reveals the nature of the Divinity as clearly as it is possible to descry it amid the deep shades of this sublunary world.

The God of Moses is not, like the imaginary deities of his contemporary philosophers, indif-

ferent to the fate, present or future, of human kind, consigning over to the caprice of fortune or the fatality of destiny beings endowed with intellect and immortality. He is the Father and the Friend of his people, walks in invisible, but yet sensible, majesty, amongst them; dwells in their tents, selects and treats them as his own precious inheritance; adopts them as his children, and, as the eagle with outstretched wings covers and protects her tender brood, he fosters them under the shadow of his presence and providence, nourishes them with manna prepared for their use in the clouds of heaven, and refreshes them, in the midst of arid and weary solitudes, with streams of pellucid water, leaping, at the stroke of his prophet's wand, from the barren and desolate rock. That God, who walked and conversed with Adam among the virginal bowers of Eden, continued with his posterity, although tainted by the original iniquity of their progenitor, and in process of time, the more admirably to prove his love for mankind, embodied in the person of his Eternal Son the Divinity and humanity, and gave evidence to heaven and earth that it was his "delight to be with the children of men."

It is true that the author of the Pentateuch, having to address his language and adapt his

ideas to mortal men, is compelled to speak of God after a human manner,—to attribute to the Eternal affections and faculties which, rigorously speaking, cannot be applied to him; yet this is counteracted by the exact and spiritual notions which he, at due times, conveys of the Divinity, and thus admonishes us of the true signification which should be given to his metaphorical expressions.

From the teachings of pagan philosophy no information could be derived respecting the origin of the world or the creation of man. Over these and similar momentous facts, a gloomy, an impenetrable veil of ignorance was thrown, which no hand, save one directed and empowered from above, could draw from the scene. Poetry, imagination, superstition, had in vain attempted to display to the bewildered reason of man the source and power to which all things—and himself especially—should be traced back. The Pentateuch removes every vestige of uncertainty, and discloses, in plain but splendid verity, the history of the formation of man's being; and while it exhibits the mortal part moulded, by a a plastic energy, out of the slime of the earth, it tells, in like manner, of the soul,—the breath of the Eternal Spirit, who breathed into the

comely, but originally cold and lifeless body, and infused into its nostrils warmth and immortality. It convinces the reader of the exalted and heaven-born character of man, the master-piece of Infinite Wisdom, who, ere the perfect work was undertaken, seemed to deliberate with himself how to impress upon it the image of his own Divinity. One only word was all that was required to produce the heavens and earth, with *their ornaments* and irrational inhabitants; but the production of the intellectual and godlike master of creation is represented, in these pages, as the premeditated effect of the omnipotence and wisdom of the Trinity,—"*Faciamus hominem*, Let us make man."

Not satisfied with acquainting man with his Creator, and with imparting to him the most accurate ideas of the Divinity, the author of the Pentateuch teaches, also, the duties which man is bound to pay Him. Essential duties, founded upon the natural relation existing between the creature and the Creator, upon the absolute dependency of the former on the infinite majesty of the latter, and upon the necessity of expressing and testifying, by homage, and sacrifice, and prayer, a profound sense of gratitude for the favors bestowed on the human race. Those

duties are contained in the Decalogue, and may be comprised in that one great commandment, placed by Moses at the head of all the others:— *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with all thy mind:* a golden precept, which, including the love of one's neighbor as one's self, was promulgated afterwards by Christ the Messiah, as the compend of the New Law, as well as the cardinal maxim of the Old, on which the Law depended and the Prophets. Of this sublime nature is the religion prescribed by the author of the Pentateuch,— so pure, so enlightened, and so perfect, that of it mere human philosophy never could have conceived the faintest notion.

The legislative character of the Pentateuch is not less admirable, in its theory and adaptation, than the one of which I have just treated.

In promulgating his code, every legislator has some particular end in view; and to this all his legislation is meant to be directed. Among various people, various objects were proposed to be attained; that of the Spartans, for instance, differed from that of the Athenians; and hence, while Lycurgus gave laws for the purpose of forming robust and vigorous men, Solon's legislation had in view the refinement of the mind

and the polish of life, by encouraging the arts and sciences. Both succeeded in their different objects. The Spartan was famed for his bodily strength and activity, the Athenian for his mental elegance and intellectual accomplishments. A Latin poet, Propertius, has sung of the former:—

> "Multa tuæ, Sparte, miramur jura palæstræ:"
> *We admire thee, Spartan, in thy manly games;*

while Horace has not forgotten to transmit to posterity this eulogy of the latter:—

> "Adjecere bonæ paulo plus artis Athenæ."
> *Athens hath added to the fine arts more.*

An infinitely more vital and lofty motive than either of the former inspired the legislation of Moses; it was the the preservation of the Hebrew people from idolatry, the conservation among them of the knowledge of the Most High, and the preparation, at a long distance of time, for the coming of the Messiah. On these as its essential foundation is based the whole of the Mosaic code, and all the circumstantial enactments that grew out of that original code must be regarded and understood in reference to that threefold object which its author had in view. To examine them all in detail would require

volumes. Volumes, indeed, there are, within the reach of every individual desirous of entering more thoroughly into the study of this question, in whose elaborate and erudite pages nothing is left untouched that might demonstrate the supreme wisdom of the minutest points of the Mosaic laws. Suffice it, on this occasion, to appeal to experience as a witness. The clearest proof of the wisdom of a legislator is the fact of his having fully and effectually attained the end which he proposed by the promulgation of his laws. That Moses has accomplished this, the history of the past and the experience of the present render evident to the mind of the ingenuous and reflecting inquirer. If we go back into the past, we then find, in the midst of the dismal darkness and lamentable superstitions that enveloped and debased the surrounding nations of the earth, the Jewish people enlightened by the knowledge, and elevated by the worship, of the true and only God. If we cast our eyes upon the present, do we not behold the same people, despite of all their vicissitudes and their calamities, adhering with unprecedented fidelity —though, unfortunately, laboring under a sad hallucination—to the worship of the God of their fathers? Nothing can alienate them from Him

who brought them out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. Their fidelity to the Law is, indeed, a marvel, and there is no means of accounting for it, except the profound and enduring conviction of its divinity, which neither dispersion throughout the universe, nor despondency at their long and fruitless expectation of the Messiah, can eradicate from their hearts. This being the end of the Mosaic legislation, its wisdom, consequently, cannot be disputed.

The laws of the Pentateuch are moral, civil, and ceremonial. The first—for example, the Decalogue, and the other precepts depending on it—are founded on the law of nature; they may be said to be a ratification, in more distinct characters, of that law which, having, in the beginning, been written by the Creator on the human heart, was afterwards inscribed by the same Eternal Legislator on tablets of stone. Hence it is manifest that this part of the Pentateuch could never be abrogated, but was, on the contrary, emphatically enforced, by the Divine Legislator of the Christian world. The second—the civil—were those issued by God's own will, and regard either the administration of the government, or the duties of individual citizens. The third

—ceremonial—emanated, in like manner, from God's good pleasure, and refer to the regulation, practice, and external rites of Divine worship. What an immense field for commentary here expands before the mind! But its magnitude forbids me from even entering upon it, and I, therefore, hasten to the consideration of the poetic division of the Pentateuch.

In approaching this topic of my remarks, I only regret that I am not possessed of at least a portion of the eloquence of a Rollin, a La Harpe, or a Chateaubriand, to do some justice to its exalted merits. The beauty and sublimity of the poetry of Moses immeasurably surpass the most admired strains of Homer; and eminently entitle him to the honor of being the first of poets, as we have proved him to be the greatest of historians, legislators, and theologians. Innumerable passages might be culled from the pages of the Pentateuch in exemplification and proof of this assertion; I will, however, direct the reader's attention to a few. For instance, the blessing of Jacob, in Genesis, chapter xxvii; the prophecy of Balaam, in Numbers, chapter xxiv; and the blessing of Moses, before his death, upon the tribes of Israel, in the thirty-third chapter of Deuteronomy. I point especially to these three

passages, (numberless others, and particularly the canticle after the crossing of the Red Sea, might also be quoted,) as, in my earlier years, I attempted to render them, as literally as possible, into verse: —

JACOB'S BLESSING.

The dew of heaven may God bestow,
  The fatness of the earth be thine;
For thee may corn abundant grow,
  And ever fruitful be the purple vine.

Thee let the people always serve,
  And the tribes worship as their lord;
Thy brethren ne'er from thee shall swerve,
  Thy mother's children shall obey thy word.

Cursed the man who curseth thee:
Let him who blesseth filled with blessings be.

BALAAM'S PROPHECY.

How beautiful, O Jacob, are
  Thy tabernacles bright!
Thy tents, O Israel, how fair
  And lovely to the sight!

As gentle valleys, crowned with wood,
  As gardens near the river's tide,
As tabernacles pitched of God,
  As cedars by the water's side.

Out of his bucket streams shall flow,
His seed in waters deep be proved,
Agag, his king, shall be laid low,
And his proud kingdom be removed.

From Egypt God hath brought him out,
Whose strength is like unto the power
Of the rhinoceros;—they shall rout
The hostile nations, and devour;

And break their bones, and pierce them through
With arrows sharp and merciless:
He, lying down, hath slept, as though
A lion or a lioness,

Whom to arouse from sleep none durst:
Who blesseth thee shall blessed be;
But reckoned, too, among the accursed
Shall stand that man who curseth thee.

THE BLESSING OF MOSES ON THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

"Let Reuben live, nor let him die, for he
In number small and limited shall be."

And this is Juda's blessing:—"Lord, give ear
To Juda's voice, and hearken to his prayer:
Conduct him in unto his people. And
He shall fight for him, and no foe shall stand
Against His helping and resistless hand."

He said to Levi,—"To that man of heaven
Be thy perfection and thy doctrine given,

Who hath temptation's strongest power defied,
And been at contradiction's waters tried;
Who to his father, mother, brethren, spake,—
'I do not know you;' and could dare forsake
Their children; these thy covenant have observed,
And from thy holy word have never swerved,
Thy judgment, Jacob; thy law, Israel;—these
With burning incense shall thy wrath appease,
And on thine altars holocausts shall place.
Lord, bless his strength, nor from him turn thy face;
Strike, strike the backs of his fierce enemies,
And let not them that hate him dare to rise."

To Benjamin he said,—"In him shall dwell,
With confidence, the one whom God loves well,
All day, as in the chamber of a bride,
And rest between his shoulders shall abide."

He said to Joseph, too,—"The land be given
Of the Lord's blessing, of the fruits of heaven,
And of the dew, and of the sea below
That lieth, and of all the fruits that grow
And ripen by the moon, or by the sun,
Whether the everlasting hills upon,
Or on the ancient mountain-tops brought forth;
Be his the fulness and the fruits of earth.
His blessing, in the bush who burned, come down
On Joseph's head, and on the Nazarite's crown.
On him, among his brethren, is conferred
The beauty of the firstling of the herd:
His horns like horns of the rhinoceros are,—
With them shall he the nations push afar
E'en to the earth's remotest boundaries.
Manasses' thousands, Ephraim's hosts, are these."

To Zabulon,—" In thy going out," he said
" O Zabulon ! and in thy tents, be glad,
Isaachar ! to the mountains they shall call
Thy people, and upon their tops shall all
Their sacrifices offer, and shall slay
Victims of justice, and, as milk, shall they
Suck the deep sea's abundance, and their hands
Shall search the hidden treasures of the sands."

He said to Gad,—" Gad in his breadth be blest.
For like a lion he hath taken his rest ;
He seized the arm and head, and from his high
Preëminence, as his, doth he descry
Laid up the teacher, justices to tell,
And deal out judgment unto Israel."

To Dan he said,—" A lion young is Dan ;
He shall flow plentifully from Basan."

To Nepthali he said :—" To Nepthali
Abundance, as his portion, there shall be.
Him shall the Lord with richest favors bless ;
The ocean and the south shall he possess."

He said to Aser,—" Blest with children he,
And to his brethren acceptable be :
Dip he his foot in oil ; for it must bear
A shoe of iron and of brass ; as were
The days of youth, so shall thy old age be.
There is no God, save of the rightest ; He
Who sitteth mounted on the highest heaven
Thy helper is, by whom the clouds are driven
Hither and thither, subject to his breath :
His dwelling he hath made above ; beneath

Are stretched the everlasting arms; to naught,
Driven before him, shall the foe be brought:
Under the wings of peace shall Israel,
Alone and happy in his safety, dwell.
A land of corn and wine to Jacob's view,
And skies all misty with perpetual dew."

Having, thus far, dwelt on the contents of the Pentateuch, I now arrive at the second part of the subject, namely, *the divinity of its inspiration.* This character of divinity appears from the manner in which Moses invariably speaks, addressing himself to the people, not in his own name, but in the name of the Omnipotent. He breaks upon the nation like a messenger from on high; his language is the language of Heaven's ambassador. He is commissioned by the Lord to write the laws promulgated by Divine authority. If the mission of Moses be derived from above, it necessarily follows that the Pentateuch is divinely inspired. But the divinity of his mission is attested in a twofold manner,—by his miracles and his prophecies. Miracles in Egypt, in the passage of the Red Sea, and in the desert, all which prodigious occurrences manifestly transcended the ordinary laws of nature, and are related in a simple, grave, and unaffected style. He mentions dates, designates places, names persons. He displays them anew to the eyes of his readers, who

had been witnesses of them, or, at least, beheld around them the monuments erected to perpetuate their memory. Nor do all these marvels reflect honor upon its people. Some, on the contrary, are humiliating to their pride, and an everlasting stigma upon many of their posterity. Among these may be specified the death of Dathan and Abiron, and the leprosy of Aaron and his sister. The Israelites gave credence to these facts,—they followed Moses to the desert on the strength of his prodigious achievements, submitted to the yoke of a heavy law, and clung to their leader with a fidelity little short of enthusiasm. Would this have been the case, had the narrative of Moses been a fiction? Would he not have been contradicted, and refuted, and abandoned? Would it have been possible for him to impose so flagrant and notorious a delusion on the common sense of an entire nation, and entail it upon all posterity? No, men believed the writings of Moses because they knew the veracity of them; the events were fresh, and had been witnessed by a whole nation. They were acknowledged to be miraculous, and, consequently, it follows that the divinity of Moses' mission and the inspiration of the Pentateuch are signalized and attested by his miracles.

It is, moreover, confirmed by his prophecies. The accomplishment of events, predicted years, and even centuries, previous to their coming to pass, can be the effect only of supernatural inspiration. The seer, who, fired with a heavenly enthusiasm, summons up from the deep womb of the future deeds and persons, and describes them with the accuracy of one before whose eye they are existing, cannot be less than an ambassador from the Eternal before whom "a thousand years are but as yesterday." Now Moses did this: predicted the prosperity of Israel, if faithful to the worship of Jehovah, and his calamities, if recreant to his commandments,—that fertility should dwell in the soil, that abundance should cover the land, that peace should hover over the nation, as long as they would continue obedient to the Lord their God. But if they should fall into idolatry, he warned them that all these blessings should be withdrawn from them: they should become the prey of their enemies, their beautiful land should be seized upon by the rapacity of strangers, and they themselves carried away into ignominious captivity. That all these predictions have been verified, no one acquainted with the history of the Jews can deny. The skeptic cannot cite an epoch when Israel was rich

or powerful, without being, at the same time, faithful to the Law; and never was he forgetful of it, never guilty of the crime of idolatry, without being visited with condign punishments on account of his prevarication. In the midst of the surrounding providences of Heaven, the people murmur; and Moses predicts, that, in chastisement of their ingratitude and mutiny, not one among them,—with the exception of Caleb and Josue,—over the age of twenty years, should reach the promised land. What was the result? Those two individuals alone excepted, the six hundred thousand souls who were then living perished, according to the terrible pre-announcement of their fate, in the heart of the wilderness.

Again, Moses foretold that the succession in the Jewish priesthood should be confined to the family of Phinees. This, too, was faithfully realized. For that favored family alone held the pontifical censer in the days of David, as well as in those of the Machabees, and the long and uninterrupted series of pontiffs which we discover in the holy writings is traced exclusively through the posterity of Phinees.

He predicted, that, in consequence of not always having displayed sufficient confidence, during their trials, in the protecting providence of Jeho-

vah, neither himself nor his brother Aaron should reach the land of promise. And both were, in effect, doomed to forego the privilege of treading upon that blessed soil, in sight of whose fertile plains and smiling valleys they were gathered to their fathers.

But still another, and a more extraordinary, prediction did he make,—one which, in the minds of the remotest posterity, and of all the inhabitants of the world, was to be the unerring test of his inspiration and the divinity of his mission. This was, that ALL NATIONS should, one day, be brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God, and should be blessed in the seed of Abraham. And thousands of years after this announcement, we cast our eyes around the globe, and are filled with amazement, and confirmed in our faith in the Divinity of the Pentateuch, at contemplating the event. The gods of the Gentiles have been forgotten, the temples reared to them in Egypt, and in other once gorgeous and potent regions, when idolatry swayed the earth, have mouldered away, while the God of Abraham is adored and served wherever the sun shines, by Christian and by Jew.

He declared, moreover, that in the fulness of time, God would raise up, from among the Jew-

ish race, a prophet like himself, and a legislator supreme, whom all men were commanded to hear and believe, under the penalty of drawing upon themselves the wrath of Heaven. This wonderful personage was, indeed, to appear amid circumstances less terrific than those that accompanied the mission of Moses, but with credentials from the same Divine authority,—nay, with a person of itself Divine, inasmuch as he was to be the Son of God and the Redeemer of mankind. Hear the words in which the author of the Pentateuch foretells, in the name of the Eternal, the advent of that Saviour:—"I will raise them up a prophet out of the midst of their brethren like to thee: and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him." —*Deuteron.* xviii, 18. Has that prophet been "raised up?" The world has witnessed his coming. In Judea, as foretold, he made his appearance; born of a virgin of Nazareth, he came forth from its shady valleys into the city of Jerusalem, and proclaimed his law;—not, indeed, enveloped in dark clouds, and speaking amid the clangor of trumpets and the peals of thunder, but clothed in simplicity and meekness, like a brother among brethren,—vindicating his character as "the prophet" by innumerable miracles, dis-

charging the functions which brought him into the world, and accomplishing to the letter the prediction of Moses.

Christians contemplate the fulfilment of the prophecy in the august and Divine person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Jews combine with Christians in its ultimate fulfilment, if not, according to their idea, in HIM, certainly, at some indefinite period, in their expected Messiah. Their incredulity, however, in the true "prophet" has not gone unavenged. The woes that have befallen their race, exiled from the Holy City, and scattered, without an altar, a priesthood, or a sacrifice, to the four quarters of the globe, prove the denunciation of the Messiah to be realized in their regard:—"*Ego ultor existam*, I will be the revenger."

Independently of these external characters of Divinity impressed upon the mission and writings of Moses, there are others of an intrinsic nature, which demonstrate the spirit of God by which he was directed. Impostors are not in the habit of giving very sublime ideas of the Deity, or of enforcing men's mutual and necessary duties towards one another, or of vindicating the majesty and sanctity of truth. Moses, on the contrary, labors to inculcate, on every occasion, the loftest notions

of the magnificence and greatness of Jehovah; has published the wisest laws touching our relations with our fellow-men; and produced the most solemn, unequivocal, and convincing evidences of the verity of his doctrines. To this end has he instituted the pomp and splendor of the Jewish ceremonial, which incomparably surpasses the inventions of other wise men, and sealed all the elements of his system by laws infinitely wiser and purer than those of Zeleucus, Solon, or Lycurgus, —laws breathing a spirit of philosophy so sublime and excellent as never to have been emulated, much less equalled, in the most polished and enlightened subsequent epochs of time. From the miracles, therefore, and the prophecies of Moses, as well as from his virtues, disinterestedness, and veracity, his character as an inspired writer is unquestionable. Consequently, the Pentateuch is a divine book.

I am not ignorant of the objections which infidel philosophy has brought against the inspiration of the Pentateuch. I know that criticism has contested its authenticity and integrity; that astronomy, history, and geology have essayed to contravene its epochs and its data; that chemistry has taxed with absurdity the natural events it records, and ethics have condemned as cruel,

unjust, and imprudent the legislation it decrees. But, on the other hand, I likewise know that all these difficulties have been thoroughly investigated, and entirely removed, by the aid of sound and enlightened philosophy. It would, indeed, be a truly instructive and eminently interesting study for every Christian, to apply the principles of such philosophy to all the perplexing questions which are deemed paradoxical by the superficial criticism of the impious philosopher,—the creation, the fall of man in the garden of Eden, the deluge, the history of the kings of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the miracles in the desert, the story of Balaam, and the right of the Israelites to take possession of the land of Canaan. On these subjects a series of important essays might be written to great advantage; the matter, as appears from the mere heads, is copious, nay, inexhaustible, and I shall readily be excused from so much as touching upon it in the present chapter. A few words more may, perhaps, be allowed me, to lay before the reader a last and irrefragable argument in vindication of the Divinity of the Pentateuch. It is this:—All Scripture has been written, not merely with the assistance, but under the immediate inspiration, of the Holy Ghost; but the Pentateuch constitutes

a part of the Scripture. This proposition has never been disputed by the Christian or Jew; it is denied only by the skeptic, who eschews all revelation, or by the Manichæan, who pretended that the Ancient Testament was the production of the Evil Principle, or by the Albigenses, the lineal descendants of the followers of Manes, who, though they be lauded by the declamation of the enemies of Rome as true evangelical Christians, yet rejected the Pentateuch, and the Old Testament, with the exception of the few isolated passages which Christ or the Apostles have quoted from them.

The usual arguments which are employed to demonstrate the inspiration of the Old Testament in general, serve still more directly and more forcibly to prove that of the Pentateuch in particular, which is supported by the unvarying and perpetual tradition of the Jewish people; and not only by the orthodox Hebrews, but likewise by all sects,—Samaritans, Hellenist Jews, and others, unanimously admit and hold to the inspiration of these writings of Moses. The Church, too, which was made by Christ the depository of all truth, whether written or traditionary, has ever esteemed inspired, and venerated and handed down as such, the books of the Pentateuch. Of

this there is a bright and perpetual chain of evidences in the canons of the General Councils, in the writings of the Fathers, and in the discipline of the Church ordaining the public reading of those books, to confirm the faith of her children, by opening to them the primitive fountains of inspiration and Divine revelation. From those unerring sources the early Apologists of the Christian religion were accustomed to draw their strongest arguments,—and, in a word, their authority was never questioned or disputed by the Catholic or the heterodox.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES OF THE SCRIPTURE, THEIR TRANSLATION, AND CANONICITY.

As the Ancient Testament comprises all the books written under Divine Inspiration, before, so the New Testament is composed of those divinely inspired after, the coming of Jesus Christ. These are: the four Gospels of St. Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John; the Acts of the Apostles compiled by St. Luke; fourteen Epistles of St. Paul: to the Romans one, to the Corinthians two, to the Galatians one, to the Ephesians one, to the Philippians one, to the Colossians one, to the Thessalonians two, to Timothy two, to Titus one, to Philemon one, to the Hebrews one; two Epistles of St. Peter; three of St. John; one of St. James; one of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse of St. John. Of all these, the Church recognizes and teaches the undoubted canonicity.

The original tongue spoken by man is generally supposed to have been the Hebrew. No other language was formed until after the deluge, and the destruction of the Tower of Babel.

The Old Testament was written in that tongue, with the exception of a few books in which the inspired Hagiographers have spoken of celebrated personages, and given rules of conduct relative to morals and religion.

The New Testament was written in Greek, with the exception of the Gospel of St. Matthew and St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, which were composed in modern Hebrew.

As these Divine Books were intended for all nations, it became necessary that they should be faithfully translated into the different languages. Of the Old Testament an authentic version was made into Greek by the seventy wise men, under Ptolomy the Second, surnamed Philadelphus, King of Egypt. Hence the appellation of the *Septuagint.* That translation afforded to millions of foreign people the opportunity of reading those sacred writings, and of deriving from them the knowledge of divine truth. St. Chrysostom considers it a great miracle that a Barbarian King, a perfect stranger to the true Religion, should have caused the Scripture to be translated into the Greek tongue, thereby propagating the knowledge and revelations of God, among all the nations of the earth. And St. Augustine happily remarks: that "the jealousy of the Jews prevented them

from communicating to strangers the Divine Scriptures: but God employed an idolatrous King to make them known to the Gentile nations."

That this translation was accurate and approved by the Jews themselves, is certain from the fact, that it was so considered and revered, in the lifetime of Jesus Christ and the Apostles.

Another version, both of the Old and New Testament, was made into the Latin language, by St. Jerome, in 405, and is called the *Vulgate.** This is the only translation which the Council of Trent pronounces accurate: and is consequently venerated as such by the whole Catholic world.

The Apocalypse was written in Greek by St. John on the Island of Patmos, to which he was exiled by the Emperor Nero. The subject is prophetical, and abounds with images, symbols, and all the beauties of Oriental poesy; through which he makes known his revelations and the principal events relating to the Religion of Christ; the abolition of the Jewish worship, and the termination of their political existence; the destruction of Paganism and of the Roman Empire; the triumph of Christianity over the synagogue; the

* From the Latin word *Vulgari*—to spread abroad.

glory of the Church on earth, the last judgment, and the felicity of the saints in Heaven.*

The first Canon was that of Esdras, a Hebrew Priest, under Artaxerxes, King of Persia, who, while in Babylon with his exiled nation, obtained permission to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, and regulated everything relating to Divine worship. To this Canon, which is that of the Jews, the Catholic Church has added the Books of Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the fragments of Esther and Daniel, and the Machabees.

At the period of the exile of the Jews, the sacred writings were scattered, and thrown into confusion. Esdras collected all the copies that were to be found, after which an edition as correct as possible, was made. In the room of phrases which had grown obsolete, he substituted others better known. He put all in order, and replaced the Hebrew characters by Chaldaic, with which the Jews had, during the seventy years of their captivity, become familiar.

* Christ admitted the Ancient Testament to be divine: he styles it the *divine Law*, and the *divine Scripture*. The Apostles cited it as such against Jews and Pagans. Among the profane writers, who have made mention of Christ, are Suetonius, Tacitus, Ammianus Marcellinus, Roman Historians: Josephus, the Jew, and Phlegon, an historian of Asia Minor.

The last Canon is that drawn up by the Council of Trent (so called from the name of the city in Austria in which it was held.) That Council was convoked in the year 1542, and opened in 1545, under the Pontificate of Paul III, and closed in 1563, under that of Pius IV.

The principal motives for celebrating that last General Council were to expound and vindicate the doctrines of the Church, which had been attacked and rejected by Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, the reformation of manners, and the revival of strict ecclesiastical discipline. The Fathers who subscribed the acts and articles were in number two hundred and fifty-five. They pronounced the *Vulgate* authentic, and caused it to be revised after the most ancient manuscripts, and in the original text. This revision appeared at Rome in 1590, and was to be forever after, the only rule to be used in the Church.*

From what has been remarked—briefly, but I hope, clearly, on this subject—it follows, that the Bible is divinely inspired, the Book, by excellence, unique, inimitable, and, of course, that the revelations made through it are divine. In perusing this sacred volume, the reader should be actuated by simplicity, sincerity, and humility:

* *Constitutione perpetua valitura.*

not by a spirit of doubt, litigation, or self-opinion. And he should, moreover, feel, that there are "many things hard to be understood," and that lay the most towering intellect in the dust; so far are they above the comprehension of the human mind.

"All Doctors," observes an excellent writer, "all Philosophers, all men, in a word, give infallible evidence of their weakness, and passions, either by what they say, or by the manner in which they express themselves. Seneca's writings abound with fine precepts and maxims of virtue: but it is manifest, that his object was to immortalize himself by his writings. Were there no other proof of this, it would appear from his elaborate study to clothe his thoughts in an agreeable style, and his perpetual affectation of wit. Plato, whose ideas of the Divinity were far more correct than those of the common people, had the weakness to cover his sentiments. Socrates, on going to execution, hesitated whether death was a good or an evil. Such was his vacillation . . . All those Pagans who have treated of virtue have fallen into this error: that all their dissertations have in view more the reputation of the sage, than the desire to recommend virtue."*

* Abaddius.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE APOCRYPHA.

No human authority could ever distinguish the authentic writings from those that fall under the head of this chapter. It is only the Church, which, being the depository of God's holy word, can separate the genuine from the spurious. Many who are, from education, opposed to every thing Catholic, and who dispute the divine character of some of the Sacred Books, can give no reason for their conduct to satisfy the interrogatory: why do you reject them as Apocryphal?

There are two classes of Apochryphal books. The first consists of certain pseudo-epigraphic writings from the pens of good men and even Prophets, but are excluded from the Canon, on account of their having been altered and interpolated by the early Heretics. Such are the third and fourth Books of Esdras; the third and fourth of the Machabees; the prayer of Manasses, of which mention is made in the twenty-third chapter of Paralipomenon;* the hundred and fifty-first Psalm, said to have been composed by David after

* Verse 19.

the defeat of Goliah; the Prologue of the Book of Ecclesiasticus; a short preface to the Lamenta tions of Jeremiah; and the Greek appendix to the second and last chapter of the Book of Job.

The second class is made up of writings, which being the works of Rabbis and impious men, are filled with falsehood and errors. Such are the Psalms of Adam and Eve; the Gospel of Eve; the Book of the generations of Adam; the Ascension and Assumption of Moses; the little Genesis; the Testament of the twelve Patriarchs; the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Egyptians, and the twelve Apostles; the Syriac Gospel; the Gospels of Basilides, Apelles, and Tatian; the Acts of Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, proscribed by Pope Gelasius; the Acts or Periods of St. Peter; the Acts of St. John the Evangelist; of St. Philip, St. Matthew; and the Apocalypses of Thomas, Stephen, and others.

Let it not be said, that there is an intrinsic evidence of divine inspiration in some Books, and of spuriousness in others. This pretension will never convince the mind of the learned and conscientious Catholic, who can perceive as strong claims, on this score, to the inspiration in Ecclesiasticus, for instance, as his opponent can discover in Genesis, or the Canticle of Canticles.

To the care of the Church was confided the Sacred Volume by the wisdom of Him who inspired the one, and established the other. Through her vigilance and solicitude it was transcribed by faithful copyists, without the change of an *iota;* and it comes down to us perfect, as it were by a renewed inspiration, when a single comma misplaced or omitted would have materially affected the whole system of Christianity. What power but that which is clothed with infallibility could make us certain that no such mis-collocation or omission was made by the oversight, neglect, or premeditation of the Amanuensis?

CHAPTER IX.

THE SENTIMENTS OF PHILOSOPHERS AND GREAT WRITERS RESPECTING THE ANCIENT TESTAMENT.

It is strange to find what admirable testimonies in behalf of the Divinity, grandeur, and sanctity of the Bible are to be culled from the writings not only of great Christian writers, but also of infidel. All seem to have felt the mysterious influence with which it always swayed the human mind from the remotest ages. They concur in the declarations of St. Augustine, that those who were the best teachers of the people, in the ages nearest the Apostles, never hesitated to place the authority of this Book above their own, and when they cited it, were convinced that it rested upon no other authority than that of God Himself.

"The authors of the nineteenth century," writes Benjamin Constant, "who have treated the Sacred Books with a contempt mixed with fury, have judged of antiquity in a manner lamentably superficial; and the Jews are a nation whose genius, character, and religious institutions are less known than those of any other. To amuse oneself, with Voltaire, at the expense of

Ezekiel and Genesis, we must unite two things which render that amusement very sad: the profoundest ignorance, and most deplorable frivolity."*

D'Alembert confesses that "the titles of the divinity of Christianity are contained in the Books of the Old and New Testaments. The severest criticism has recognized their authenticity; the sternest reason respects the truth of the facts they relate, and the soundest philosophy, relying upon their authenticity and truth, concludes from the one and the other, that they are divinely inspired."†

And J. J. Rousseau: "I take the Scripture and Tradition for my rules of Faith."‡

"Newton, that great man," writes Fontenelle, "was not content with mere natural religion: he was persuaded of Revelation, and among all books that which he read most assiduously was the Bible."

Shaftsbury declared that he believed firmly the facts and dogmas which are taught by Religion, persuaded of its divinity, and of the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, to which every human understanding should submit. "Libertines and profane men only," he adds, "can deny abso-

* Tom. i. ch. 2. † *Encyclop.* Christ. ‡ *Emile.*

lutely, or contest the authority of, the smallest line, or one syllable, of those sacred books."

And RACINE sings:

" In this blest book, revered in every age,
The number even of the words themselves
Was held a sacred number: no rash hand
Could dare profanely alter that wise Law
Which now condemns the Jews; and clearly shews
How justly founded is the chastisement,
So long and painful, which they have sustained."

" On the left hand of the platform of the walls of Jerusalem," such is the eloquent description of LAMARTINE, " the hill which overlooks the city suddenly widens, slopes down, and developes to the eye its gentle declivities, supported here and there, by terraces of stones. This hill, some hundred paces from Jerusalem, is topped by a mosque and crowned with groups of Turkish edifices, not unlike a hamlet of Europe, adorned with its church and steeple. This hill is SION: the palace and tomb of David; the place of his inspirations and delights, of his life and repose. Place doubly sacred to me, whose heart has so often been touched, and whose mind ravished, by his divine songs. He is first of the Poets of sentiment. He is the Prince of Lyrics. The fibres of man have never trembled with accents

so deep, so penetrating, and so grave. Never have the Poet's thoughts ascended so high, and been so justly expressed. Never did the human soul pour itself forth before man and God in strains and sentiments so tender, so sympathetic, and so harrowing. All the most secret moanings of the human heart have found voices and notes on the lips and harp of this man. . . . . He seems the anticipated echo of the evangelical poesy, repeating the sweet words of Christ before he heard them. Prophet or not, according as he may be considered by Christian or Philosopher, no one can deny the Poet-King an inspiration never accorded to any other man. Read Horace or Pindar after a Psalm: for myself, I cannot. . . .

"It was at the foot of these turpentine trees, the ancestors of that which covers me now, that the Sacred Poet came to await the breath which inspired him so melodiously. Why can I not meet it, to sing the sorrows of my heart, and of every heart, in this unquiet age, as he sang the hopes of his youth and his Faith! But there is no more music in the human heart; for despair does not sing, and until some new ray shall fall upon the darksome humanity of our days, the Lyre will lie mute, and men will pass on in silence, between two abysses of doubt, without having loved, or prayed, or sung."

"The Psalms," says LE FRANC DE POMPIGNAN, "are above all eulogy. The soul finds in them all the sentiments necessary to live in peace with oneself, with men, with God. All the resources he stands in need of in misfortune and oppression. By the side of menaces and chastisements walk hope, consolation, and favor."

"The first chapters of *Proverbs*," remarks SALGUES, "are written in a poetical manner: all the ideas are there embellished by the charm of its figures and diction. It is a brilliant eulogy of wisdom, with a vivid and animated invitation to follow her dictates. The tenth and following chapters are in a different style. All is simple and modest. Ornament disappears to give place to counsels and maxims, the sublimity of which cannot be too greatly admired. What adds new merit to this precious work, is that the brow of the Moralist is never supercilious or austere. His precepts have nothing of the dryness and gloom of the Stoic Philosophy, which is sometimes admired, but seldom loved."

And AMAR: "Solomon, in giving advice, assumes the gentle name of Father: and this title is justified on every page, in every word, by the very nature of the subject, and the manner in which it is conveyed."

The *Canticle of Canticles* may be considered, as Dr. BLAIR justly remarks, a beautiful piece of pastoral poetry. In its spiritual sense it is undoubtedly a mystic allegory; from the beginning to the end, it is filled with images borrowed from nature, and from pastoral life.

The following poetical tribute to the ancient Testament, by FONTANES, will conclude this subject:

Who hath not read, who hath not oft admired
That Book by Heaven for the Jews inspired.
Racine and Bossuet it, at once, hath charmed,
The latter with God's vengeful thunder armed,
Hath, as it were, from Sinai's summit hurled
Destruction against error and the world.
The former, blending on his tragic page
Beauty and terror brings upon the stage
The Holy City—and then Rousseau's muse
Seizes the Harp of Sion, which he strews
With noble language and with pompous rhyme,
And wakes a song prophetic and sublime.
Poets and Orators example take:
Enthusiasm dwells upon the lake.
On Jordan's banks, on Lebanon's proud height,
In Eden's bowers of beauty and delight.
'Mong them the world's first vestiges are found;
There, without number, prodigies abound.
God speaks—man lives; and sleeping, for awhile,
Awakes beneath his consort's modest smile.
Then with the innocence that swayed his heart,
His heaven-born peace and happiness depart.

The first just man expires—O guilt profound!
And in the flood the wicked world is drowned.
The ark alone, beneath the Eternal's eye,
Above the engulphing billows rises high,
While all things else in ruin wide are whirled,
Sole hope of the regenerated world.
Beneath their peaceful tents I see around
Chiefs of the people, Patriarchs renowned,
Abraham and Jacob: to our latest days
The East their brilliant vestiges displays,
Which o'er our manners shed, as from the sky,
A light of innocence and simplicity.
At Rachel's tomb I pause with saddened heart—
To Egypt soon, her son bids me depart.
O Joseph, by thy brethren's hate pursued,
How often have my eyes, in pensive mood,
Shed o'er the pages which thy woes relate
Tears of compassion for thy wretched fate.
The faithful tribes torn from their hallowed plains,
Groan near the Nile beneath the captive chains,
But God is with them and his own he saves:
Who is that infant floating on the waves?
'Tis He whose arm will raise up Israel's pride:
Haste, Pharaoh's daughter, to the river's side,
Rescue the child, protection safe bestow
On Him ordained to terminate her woe.
The waters of the deep, at his command,
Afford a passage to his chosen band,
And Israel, freed from Pharaoh's iron rod,
Raises her song of gratitude to God.
Upon the mountain, red with flaming smoke,
The Law is published—amid thunder spoke
Jehovah, from the deep and lowering cloud
Which wrapt Mount Sinai in its awful shroud.

The pillar black and luminous, by turns,
Shadows the day, and in the dark night burns:
While as they journey towards the promised land
The desert owns Jehovah's mighty hand—
On Gabaon's walls the chariot of the sun
Stands still: see that devoted one
Jephta's lost daughter, fair but fated child,
A mourning virgin on the mountains wild.
The fickle people seek, with mumurings,
To change the laws: God scourges them with Kings.
Saul reigns and falls—a shepherd takes his place,
The hopes of nations centre in his race—
Bravest of monarchs;—when his reign is done,
The wisest mounts the consecrated throne.
Next Levi's Sons around the altar stand
The censer in each consecrated hand . . . . . .
I raise my dazzled eyes and lo! afar
Elijah mounting on his fiery car.
With Raguel and Tobias bread I break,
And of their hospitality partake.
I hear those holy men, whose voices ring
Amid the past, and of the future sing:
I see great Empires, on their destined day,
And all their glory, tottering, in decay.
In ashes Sidon, Queen of Waters, lies;
What shrieks of wo towards the Euphrates rise!
Juda, who seated on a distant shore,
Didst weep, rejoice! thy misery is o'er.
The mighty arm is raised to avenge thy woe,
And lay the tyrant who oppressed thee low.
Soon shall Jerusalem, glorious, as of old,
Her Esdras and her Machabees behold.
Sion is bright—MESSIAH's reign is near;
Before whose orb I pause in my career.

CHAPTER X.

SENTIMENTS OF PHILOSOPHERS AND GREAT WRITERS RESPECTING THE GOSPEL.

The Religion of the Gospel shrinks not from the light, but on the contrary, courts the inquiry of Learning and Philosophy. From the cloud which Scepticism and Error sometimes throw over her Beauty, she does not fail to emerge, with renewed and fresher radiance, which is increased by the testimonies which she receives from the genius of the most gifted and illustrious writers.

"Religion," says Victor Cousin, "occupies a considerable place in life. She receives us at our birth, marks us with her seal, watches over and governs our infancy and youth, interposes in all the great movements of life, and stands by us in our last hour. One cannot be born, or live, or die, without Her. She is found every where; the earth is covered with her monuments, and it is impossible not to witness her demonstrations, or feel her influence."

Guizot writes: "Two sublime powers, Religion and philosophy, have for their object the

happiness of man, with this difference, that, under the empire of Religion, Nature is guided by a wisdom which cannot be deceived."

"That divine Book, the Gospel," Rousseau thus expresses *his* sentiments on this matter, "the only book necessary for a Christian, and the most useful of all others even to him who is not, need only be meditated upon, to penetrate the soul with a love of its Author, and a desire to fulfil his precepts. Never has Virtue uttered a language so sweet. Never has the most perfect Wisdom spoken with so much energy and simplicity. One cannot peruse it without being better than before."*

And again: "The majesty of the Bible astonishes me: the sanctity of the Gospel speaks to my heart. See the works of the philosophers with all their pomps: how little they are by the side of that: can a book so sublime and simple be the work of man? Can it be that He whose history it relates is but a man himself? Is that the tone of an Enthusiast or an ambitious Lecturer? What sweetness! what purity in His morals! what touching grace in His instructions! what elevation in His maxims! what presence of mind! what accuracy and justness in His answers!

* *Emile.*

what command over His passions! Where is the Man, where is the Philosopher, who can act, suffer, and die without weakness, and without ostentation? When Plato paints his imaginary just man, covered with all the opprobrium of crime, and yet worthy of all the honors of virtue, he paints, trait after trait, the person of Jesus Christ. The resemblance is so striking, that all the Fathers have noticed it, and it cannot be mistaken. What prejudices, what blindness must there not be, to compare the Son of Sophronica with the Son of Mary! . . . . .

"Shall it be said, that the history of the Gospel is an invention? But the facts of Socrates, which no one doubts, are less authenticated than those of Jesus Christ. . . . It would be more inconceivable that several men had conspired to fabricate this book, than it is that one man alone should have formed the subject of it. No Jewish authors could ever have discovered its tone or its moral: and the Gospel is stamped with characters of truth so grand, so striking, so perfectly immutable, that the inventor of it would have been more astonishing than the Hero."

"We do not respect this book precisely as a book, but as the word and life of Jesus Christ."*

* *Lettre de la Mont.* liv. *iv.*

"The Gospel is sublime, and the strongest bond of society."*

Justly has Pope Clement XIV remarked, "that the Gospel is the rule of the Christian; it should be the principle and foundation of Religion."

And Chateaubriand: "An effort has been made to regard as fanatically persecuting, the enemy of letters, the sciences, and the arts, the enemy of human liberty, a religion which is tolerance and charity itself: a religion to which we owe the noblest discoveries of genius. Far from causing the mind to retrograde, or from favoring oppression, Christianity has thrown open the chaos of our nature: it has shewn that man, who was supposed to have attained all his virility among the Romans, was yet in his cradle. It has given the strides of a giant to the advancement of society, by abolishing slavery, by declaring to the nations that they can and should exist without serfs, and proclaiming equality of rights to men. A light, when blending with the faculties of the mind,—a sentiment, when it associates itself with the movements of the soul,—the Christian Religion increases with civilization, marches on with time towards the perfection of society, and rejects no

* *Contrat Social.*

form of government. By governing the people as well as kings, it resists only the excess of power, from whatever quarter it may spring. It is on the morality of the Gospel, the Divine Reason, that human reason relies in its progress towards an end not yet obtained. Thanks to that morality, we have learned that the old age of the human race does not deprive it of independence, and there is for modern nations a Liberty, the offspring of Light, as there was among the Ancients a Liberty, the Daughter of Morality."*

With this profound and elegant sentiment of the immortal author of the *Genie du Christianisme*, that of VOLTAIRE, expressed many years before, is in perfect accordance: "Religion does not deprive us of reason, but purifies and ennobles it. Religion does not destroy men, it makes them saints."

And ROUSSEAU, filled with admiration for religion, which, in spite of his vagaries and errors, ever and anon, burst forth from his glowing bosom, exclaims: "What a powerful argument against the unbelievers is the life of a Christian! If he reflected with attention, he would be compelled to say: No, man is not thus of himself; something more than human reigns here!"

* *Discours a l'Academie*, Feb. 9, 1826.

And in his *prize discourse before the Academy of Dijon*, he breaks out into the same strain: "Ah! how pitiable is the condition of the sceptic! Hope guides him not in this life, which to him must seem miserable. I see a deep-fixed melancholy mingling with all his thoughts, and the prospect of utter annihilation plunges his soul into unspeakable gloom. And what is often the consequence? Life becomes insupportable, he has recourse to crime to dissipate his misery, he carries into effect that literary error, that false maxim of Voltaire:

> 'When all is lost, when Hope no longer shines,
> Life is a shame, 'tis duty then to die.'

"Rash and impious men, who are incessantly babbling against Religion, stop your blasphemies, acknowledge, at least, that your first duty is to be human, and cease spreading abroad doctrines pernicious and cheerless, and subversive of social order. It is said that the Caliph Omar, on being consulted about what should be done with the library of Alexandria, replied, if the books contain anything in opposition to the Alcoran, they are bad; burn them. If they contain nothing but what is conformable to it, burn them; they are superfluous. Our learned men have cited this

reasoning as the height of absurdity. Yet, suppose Gregory the Great, in place of the Omar, and the Gospel instead of the Koran, the library would have been burnt, and that act would have been the most beautiful trait in the life of that illustrious Pontiff. . . What ought we to think of that crowd of obscure writers, and literary idlers, who devour the substance of the State? Idlers, did I call them? Would to God they were in effect: their morals would be more sound, and society more peaceable. But these vain and futile declaimers wander about, armed with their fatal paradoxes, sapping the foundations of Faith and annihilating Virtue. They smile contemptuously at those old words, *Country* and *Religion*, and devote their Philosophy to the destruction and villification of all that is held sacred among men. Not that they hate virtue or our dogmas; they are the enemies of public opinion, and in order to bring them to the foot of the altar, it would be necessary only to rank them among Atheists. Oh, ardor, to be distinguished, what will thou not do?"

So deeply penetrated was VOLTAIRE with the truth of the sentiments of Rousseau, that he wished "to throw into the fire one-half of what he had written, and to revise the other. He had

so accustomed himself to speak freely that he was always ready to write nonsense."*

And in another place, he does not hesitate to make the remarkable avowal, that "he did not believe there ever was a Philosopher who did not acknowledge, at the hour of his death, that he had lost his time."

"We cannot be reproached," said BAYLE, "with the assertion that none but small minds have cultivated piety: for we see the *best balanced* in the person of one of the greatest geometricians (Pascal,) the most subtle metaphysician, and the most penetrating genius that the world ever produced."

"The power of judging well," observes DESCARTES, "and distinguishing truth from error, which alone makes us men, and distinguishes us from the beasts, is naturally equal among all men, and whole and entire in each. The diversity of our opinions does not arise from the fact that some are more reasonable than others, but simply because we conduct our thoughts through different ways." Hence the solidity of the remark of GAILLARD, in his eulogy of Descartes: "The truths of religion, the only fixed and immovable truths, constantly float over the ocean of ages, in which mere system and opinion are engulphed."

Tom. 83, *page* 113.

"Who," asks BENJAMIN CONSTANT, "in casting a glance over the career traced out for us, would dare pronounce recourse to religious sentiments as superfluous or useless! The causes of our sorrows are without number. Falsehood may calumniate us; the bonds of an entirely factitious society oppress us, Destiny strike us in that which me most cherish. Old age advances towards us—a dark and solemn epoch—when objects become obscure and seem to retire, and a cold, dull influence surrounds us. We seek for consolation in every direction—and almost every consolation is of a religious character. When the world abandons us, we form an alliance beyond the world: when men persecute us, we appeal to a tribunal beyond men: when we see our dearest illusions fading away, Justice, Liberty, our Country, we flatter ourselves that there exists, somewhere, a Being who will be true to us, if, in spite of our age we have been true to Justice, Liberty, and our Country. When we regret a cherished object, we throw a bridge over the abyss and cross it in thought. In fine, as the present life passes, we are hurried towards another. Thus is Religion our faithful companion, and the sincere and indefatigable friend of the unfortunate."

"Christianity," says VILLEMAIN, "will prevail in all parts of the world. From the heart of England and of Russia, the Bible, translated into every language, is daily spreading among all the tribes of Asia, even to the barbarous Septs of Tartary, and the most distant Isles of the Great Ocean. And although it were not religious propagandism, but commerce, civilization, conquest, that constituted the main object in view, yet Christianity advances, at the same time, through all the routes of human activity, and seizes upon the universe at every point. This is the revolution which the future will witness. In those great centres of civilization, Paris and London, Christianity has been criticised, contemned, rejected: but at a distance it extends with, and is inseparable from, the triumphs of civilization, with which it will cover the whole world: and when the genius of our arts will be brought to improve the nature of those barbarous regions, in the midst of all the powers of human industry, the religion of the European race will establish itself."

"There is not a moral or political truth," observes LAMARTINE, "but may be found in one verse of the Bible. Philanthropy is the offspring of its first and essential precept, Charity. Liberty has walked through the world in her paths,

and no degrading servitude can subsist before her light. Political equality grows out of the acknowledgment she has forced us to make of our equality and fraternity before God. Laws have been softened, inhuman usages abolished, chains stricken off. Woman has re-acquired the respect of man's heart. In proportion as her word has resounded through ages, she has triumphed over error or tyranny, and we may say that the present entire world, with her laws, morals, institutions, hopes, is but the Evangelical word more or less incarnated in modern civilization. But her work is far from being accomplished. The law of progress or perfection, which is the active and powerful idea of human reason, is the faith of the Gospel, which forbids us to stop in the career of good, and urges us on to become better and better. That faith forbids us to despair of humanity, before whose view she displays, perpetually, more brilliant horizons: and the more we open our eyes to the light, the more do we descry promises in her mysteries, truth in her precepts, and a boundless future in our destinies.

Cardinal Maury has justly styled Religion a "sublime Philosophy," which demonstrates the order, and unity of nature, and explains the enigma of the human heart. And Chateaubriand adds,

"that Christianity bears the scrutiny of reason; the more it is sounded, the deeper it becomes. Her mysteries explain man and nature. Her works realize her precepts. Her charity, under a thousand forms, has taken the place of the cruelty of the ancients. Without losing any of the antique pomp, her worship suits more perfectly the heart and mind. We owe her every thing, letters, the sciences, agriculture, the fine arts. She joins morality to Religion, man to God. Jesus Christ, the moral Saviour of mankind, is the physical also. He came on earth as a great and happy event to counterbalance the deluge of barbarians, and the general corruption of manners. If Christianity be denied her supernatural proofs, there would still remain in the sublimity of her moral, in the immensity of her blessings, in the beauty and sublimity of her pomps, enough to prove sufficiently that her worship is the most divine and pure, that men have ever practised. Hence we draw this conclusion: Christianity is perfect, men are imperfect. But a perfect consequence cannot follow from an imperfect principle; therefore Christianity did not proceed from men. If it did not come from men, it must have come from God. If it come from God, men could know it only by revelation. Therefore Christianity is a revealed Religion."

CHAPTER XI.

OF MAN.

Among all the creatures of earth man alone presents himself to our view adorned with reason; he stands erect with his eye fixed on the firmament, and treading under his feet the ground, as beneath his notice, and unworthy his dignity. His mind is filled with ideas, which he expresses by signs and articulate words:—he speaks, he communicates, in language, his thoughts to his fellow-beings, and his abode is in every region and every climate, because he is the monarch of Nature.

He is composed of two substances; the one spiritual, the other material. These are intimately united with each other, and reciprocally dependent on one another in their mutual functions.

The material substance is extended, divisible, capable of motion, incapable of intelligence and sentiment, and perishable. The spiritual is the breath of God—the principle of life, the soul formed after God's own image, simple, indivisible, immortal, incapable of configuration, capable of intelligence and sentiment, destined to know truth,

and love good, and having in all its actions, good or evil, the consciousness of immortality after this life.

Man was formed by the union of these two substances—one depends on the other. The well-being of the body influences the well-being of the Soul. The motion of the body depends upon the presence and influence of the Soul, and the dissolution of the body occasions not the dissolution of the Soul, but the destruction of the compound, or the separation of the Soul from the body. The Soul is recognised by the nature of its operations, which are sensitive and intellectual. The sensitive consist in the five senses: taste, sight, hearing, smell, and touch; because through these all sentiment is derived. The intellectual consists in the understanding and will. Understanding is the intelligence God has given to guide us. It is styled wit, when the understanding invents and penetrates; it is called judgment, reason, conscience, when it judges and discerns.

Will is the action by which we choose the means to pursue good and fly evil: and as some place their happiness in one thing, and some in another, their choice constitutes their free will. The existence of the soul leads us naturally to the conviction of its immortality, which is proved by

the general testimony of all nations, and especially of the wisest and most learned writers.

Rousseau has beautifully remarked, that "man sees but half during his life-time. The life of the soul commences only after the death of the body. Death is not the end of life: it is the beginning of that which will never end."*

Again: "If we were immortal, we should be miserable. It is hard to die: but it is sweet to hope that we will not live forever here, and that a better life will terminate the sorrows of the present. Our life is nothing in the eyes of God; it should be nothing in our own; and when we quit our body, we only lay aside a troublesome garment.....

"I enquire what rank I occupy in the order of things which God ordains, and I find myself, incontestably, in the first by my species. It is, then, true that man is the King of the earth which he inhabits; for he not only holds in subjection all animals, not only disposes of the elements by his industry, but he alone knows how to dispose of them on earth. He, moreover, appropriates to himself by contemplation, the Stars which he cannot approach. Shew me another animal, that knows how to make use of fire, or to admire the

* *Emile.*

Sun. What! I can observe, contemplate the universe, rise up to the hand that governs it; I can love good and do it, and would I compare myself to the beasts! Abject soul! it is fatal Philosophy that renders you like to itself:—or rather, in vain do you seek to debase yourself. Your genius gives testimony against your principles; your benevolent heart gives the lie to your doctrine; the very abuse of your faculties proves their excellence, in spite of yourself. After God, I can see nothing better than my species. I adore the Supreme Power, and my heart melts at the thought of his goodness. In meditating on the nature of man, I discover in it two distinctive principles, of which one soars to the study of eternal truths, to the love of justice, and of moral beauty—to the regions of the intellectual world, the contemplation of which constitutes the happiness of the sage;—and the other basely tends inwardly to self, is subject to the dominion of the senses, to the passions which are their ministers, and opposes all that is inspired by the sentiments of the former. I say then, man is not one: I will and will not—I feel myself, at the same time, a freeman and a slave. My worst torment when I fall is to feel that I could have resisted."

"In comparing our souls with matter," writes BUFFON, "we find a difference so great, an opposition so marked, that we cannot, for an instant, doubt they are of a nature totally different, and of an order infinitely superior."*

The same sentiment, arrayed in sweet versification, breathes through the soliloquy of LAMARTINE:

"My soul, above thyself arise—
And prove thy steady faith:
Let not the impious when thy end he eyes
Have room to say: like me, he shrinks from death
How cheering to the thinking soul, how bright,
When floating, in immensity
'Twixt hope and doubt, obscurity and light,
To see before her shine incessantly,
Immortal vistas—like a constant star
Shedding its radiance through the clouds afar,
Disclosing two shores in the view sublime
White with the foam of time!"

Who would, then, be willing to forego the consoling and ennobling belief of a future life? Who would not rather say with MONTESQUIEU: "If the immortality of the soul were an error, I should be sorry not to believe it. I acknowledge I am not as humble as the Atheists. I am charmed to believe myself immortal, like God himself."†

* *Hist. nat. de l'Homme.* † *Pens. div*

"Without the thought of another life," writes VOLTAIRE, "we would abandon ourselves to all our fatal passions, and live like brutes; having no law but our appetites and no restraint but the fear of other men, rendered eternally the enemies of one another by that natural dread. For we always wish to destroy what we fear. Think well, reflect seriously on the subject. Of what avail would be the idea of a God without power over me? This would be as if one were to say: there is an emperor of China who is very powerful. I answer, much good may it do him: let him remain in his abode, and I in mine. He has no more jurisdiction over me, than a canon of Windsor has over our own parliament. Thus, I am my God for myself, I sacrifice the whole world to my caprices, and I find occasion enough. I am without law, I look only to myself. If other beings are sheep, I make myself a wolf; if they are chickens, I am a fox. What should surprise us is that a dogma so salutary and curbing, should be made the prey of so many horrible crimes by men who have so short a time to live, and who find themselves straitened between two eternities."*

* *Tome.* 58 *and* 47.

Again he sings:

"There is a God—I am his work confest:
He stamps his image on the just man's breast;
To avenge his cause, his thunders shall be hurled,
But how? and at what time? and in what world?
Here Virtue weeps, down-trodden, for a time;
And kneeling innocence stoops her neck to crime.
Here Fortune rules—all things her car attend;
This world was made for Cæsar: let us end
Our sad and dark imprisonment below;
Come let us hurry hence and upward go!
Where Heavenly Truth—these shadows chased away—
Shall, in full radiance, all her light display:
Truth hidden in these dream-days from our eyes:
In life we dream: in death from sleep we rise."

The following address to the French people, by ROBESPIERRE, may astonish the reader, while it adds another powerful testimony in vindication of the doctrine now under consideration: "Citizens, it is in prosperity that people, as well as individuals, should, so to speak, recollect themselves, to hearken, in the silence of the passions, to the voice of wisdom. The moment when the noise of our victories echoes throughout the world, is that, in which the legislators of the French Republic should watch, with renewed solicitude, over themselves and their country, and establish the principles on which the stability and happiness

of the Republic should repose. We purpose, to-day, to submit to your meditation profound truths which involve the welfare of men, and suggest measures that naturally flow from them. . . . . . . The only foundation of civil society is morality. Consult the good of your country, and the interests of humanity. Every institution, every doctrine, that consoles and elevates the heart, should be cherished: reject all those that tend to degrade and corrupt them. Revive and exalt all those generous sentiments and moral ideas which some have labored to destroy: bring together, by the charms of friendship, and the bond of virtue, men whom they have sought to keep apart. Who has given you a mission to preach that the Divinity does not exist? You who become impassioned by this arid doctrine, but who warm not for your country? Of what advantage do you find it to attempt to persuade men that a blind force presides over his destinies, and strike, at random, crime and virtue? that his soul is but a thin breath which vanishes at the mouth of the tomb?

"Would the idea of annihilation inspire him with sentiments more pure, or more elevated than that of immortality? Would it inspire him with greater respect for his fellow-beings and himself? More devotion to his country? More daring in

braving tyranny? More contempt of death and pleasure? You who deplore a virtuous friend, who love to think that the nobler part of himself escapes forever at death: you who mourn over the bier of a daughter or a wife, are you consoled by him who tells you there is nothing beyond the dust of the grave? The unhappy man who expires under the blow of an assassin, sends up his last sigh as an appeal to the Eternal Justice. Innocence on the scaffold makes the tyrant turn pale on his car of triumph. Would it have this power, did the tomb cover alike the oppressor and the oppressed? Wretched sophist! What right have you to wrest from innocence the sceptre of reason, to place it in the hands of crime, to cast a funeral shroud over nature, to reduce the unfortunate to despair, to make vice glad, and virtue sad, and degrade humanity? The more a man is endowed with sensibility and genius, the more importance he attaches to thoughts that enlarge his being, and elevate his heart: and the doctrine of men of this stamp becomes that of the Universe. And why should not these thoughts be truths? For myself, I cannot see why nature could suggest to man fictions more useful than all realities. And if the existence of God, if the immortality of the soul be dreams, they would, nevertheless, be the

most splendid conceptions of the human mind. . . . . The idea of a Supreme Being, and the immortality of the soul, are a continual appeal to justice: it is then, social, and republican." This sentence was applauded by the multitude to whom it was addressed.

"Man," writes BUFFON, "is not more reasonable or more spiritual for having made great use of his eyes and ears. We do not find that men whose senses are more obtuse, whose sight is short, whose hearing hard, whose smell insensible, have less mind than others. An evident proof that there is in man something more than the interior animal sense."

I will conclude this subject with the following verses of MARMONTEL:

"Man leaves his lifeless ashes in the clod:
But his undying soul—that breath of God—
Like to the vapor which the clouds dispel
Shall it for ever bid this life farewell?
Shall I believe in that Lethean wave
Which to Oblivion sweeps and to the Grave
The memory of all things—and deprives
The Just man of due eulogy, and gives
The wicked to oblivion?—far from me
This hope of dark annihilation be—
This cloud which wraps all glory in its gloom,
And quenches Hope's bright flambeau in the tomb.
If Death should sever all life's links, what worth
Would glory be, beyond the present earth

Of what avail that longing of the heart
For future memory? Why do tyrants start
With horror at the thought—that in the dust
Their deeds shall sleep not, in opprobrium just?
Why should the hero brave and smile at death
If all his glory vanish with his breath?
No; man survives with glory or with shame:
Turenne has left a bright undying name;
Condè the voice of Bossuet from the spheres
Of Heaven—that voice sublime and tender—hears:
And when a people, with his homage charmed,
Fancied they saw that hero breathing, armed,
Spring from the tomb—was this a prestige vain?
Did not his shadow rise to earth again?
Did not he break the mausoleum, stand,
And move, among the people, good and grand?
From every heart I hear a voice resound—
There is a feeling general, profound,
Which, in all regions, and in every age,
Inflames the hero, and consoles the sage.
Ungrateful to them has their country been?
Or have they times of persecution seen?
Upon their minds the future sheds its ray:
This Socrates beheld e'en on that day,
When in his hand he took the poisoned cup:
This Cato saw when calmly yielding up
His soul magnanimous.—This soothed thy heart,
When bleeding under envy's poisoned dart,
Sublime Columbus! And when death drew nigh
Assured thee of a fame that cannot die.
Before a dread tribunal shall be borne
Those chains injurious which thy hands have worn,
And though thy body in the tomb be laid
Thy soul for all posterity was made."

CHAPTER XII.

OF WOMAN—THE SERPENT—THE FALL—ORIGINAL SIN—BAPTISM.

MAN was not destined to inhabit, alone, the world which was created for his use. There was to be formed from his rib, another being, like to himself, but of more tender texture, and gentler disposition. This was woman, his companion, his spouse, his better half. From this pair, placed together in the garden of Paradise, and afterwards expelled, in consequence of their sin, from its happy bowers, have been generated all the human beings who have peopled the universe.

"Science, without the light of the Mosaic revelation," writes MARCEL DE SERRES, "must conclude from its researches: that man was not placed on the earth simultaneously under various points of view, but under one, from which he has radiated, to people, successively, the totality of the globe, the whole extent of which his descendants rapidly embraced; and that Asia seems to have been the primitive part, and the original cradle of the human race."

The newly-created pair, stamped with God's own image, were endowed with free will: and could submit or not to the commands of their Creator, as they desired. They might have abstained from the forbidden fruit, and, in that case, would have been immortal. But the fallen Angels envied the prerogative of immortality: and the chief among them, Lucifer, under the form of a serpent, charmed the ear of the woman with the fascination of his promises, her eye with the beauty of the apple, and her heart and mind with the promise of being raised to an equality with God himself. She disobeyed her Maker, stretched out her hand, plucked that fatal fruit which contained the seeds of death, and divided it with Adam. The most fatal consequences followed: all was changed for them. The earth lost its fecundity, the delights of Eden withered on the spot—They were driven from their abode of innocence and pleasure, and condemned to toil, to sweat, and to die. If Moses, in his narrative, speaks of the serpent only, and not of the evil spirit who acted under the guise of that reptile, it was, according to St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and St. Thomas, because he apprehended that he might have given occasion to the Jewish people, who were too prone to idolatry, to be led

into some superstitious notions and errors on the subject.

Singular and wonderful as is the history of the Serpent, to call it in doubt, it would be necessary to demonstrate: first, that a spiritual being, the Demon, possessing a power of vast extent, could not cause the organs of a Serpent so to move, as to produce articulate sounds; whilst another spiritual being, our soul, inferior in power, makes use, with marvellous facility, of the portion of matter with which it is united, to articulate sounds, and effect a sensible commerce with the beings by whom it is surrounded. Secondly, respecting the malediction issued against the Serpent in these words: 1st. *Thou shalt creep upon thy belly.* To deny this, it would be requisite to prove, at least, that the Serpent crept as it now does, from the beginning. But, that never can be proved, because there exists, at this day, Serpents that fly; and because it never can be ascertained what species the Devil made use of, and which has incurred the malediction. 2d. *Thou shalt eat dust all the days of thy life.* To deny this second part of the malediction, it would be necessary to prove again, that before man's sin, every species of Serpents eat dust, or, that since, there is no kind of Serpent that feeds on it now.

Science discards each of these pretensions. The term, *eat dust*, may likewise be understood in the language of Scripture, as Bergier remarks, in the sense that the Serpent creeping after his food, obtains that which is ordinarily mixed with earth or dust. Besides we may observe with good commentators, that before Adam's fall, the Serpent did creep and eat dust, but these habits which were natural have since become a punishment; for this manner of living renders it odious and contemptible, in so much that men look upon it with disgust. It is man whom God meant to instruct in condemning the Serpent. Thus, to carry wood and water for the sacrifice was an honorable thing: and yet it was a punishment inflicted on the Gabaonites, which incessantly recalled their guilty cunning, and rendered them despicable. 3d. *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy race and her's.* To deny this third part of the curse, it would be necessary to prove: 1st. that there does not exist among all nations a sentiment of horror for the Serpent: and if from some people it received adoration, that it was not paid as to a malign and fatal being, the enemy of man. Now, the contrary is the fact. 2d. That the seed of the woman, that is, Christ our Lord, has not bruised the head of the Ser

pent, by overturning the altars and temples reared in its honor, and that he does not continue to overturn them. 3d. That the Serpent does not lie in wait for her heel; that is to say, that the Devil did not unchain against the holy humanity of Christ, on the day of his passion, all the powers of darkness, employ every art and device to bring about his death, and does not yet attack it in the person of his ministers, &c. Now, this victory of the woman's Son over the Serpent, and this his warfare against that Son, are as evident as noon-day: and as this last part of the malediction is accomplished, let us conclude that the other parts must, likewise, be fulfilled.*

The classic muse of Boileau sings in the following lines, the fall of Adam, and its consequences:

"Ere that dark day that doomed his race to wo,
There was no pleasure which he did not know.
In order, then, his hunger to assuage,
It was not necessary war to wage
Against the animals: nor was there need
Of the slow ox, and plough-share, for the seed:
Then did the vine its grapes spontaneous yield,
And streams of milk meandered over the field.
But from the day, when from his lofty state
Unhappy Adam fell—grief was his fate.

* *See Catech. de perseverance*, T. v, *p.* 942.

Incessant labor must compel the earth
To give its avaricious harvests birth.
Then o'er the field sprang up the prickly brake,
And in the forests hissed the poisonous snake.
Upon the plains its fires the dog-star pours,
The furious north-wind on the mountain roars;
The sheep to screen them from the winter's cold,
Must shivering seek a cover in their fold:
And famine, pestilence, and war combined,
League to lay waste and ruin human kind."

Yes, in effect, Adam's sin plunged the human race into fatal misery. To joys and contentment, succeeded pains, sorrows, remorse. Here the voice of scepticism cries cruelty! injustice! Rash man! acknowledge the wandering of thy reason. Where is, then, the cruelty and injustice? Why, when the heart is affected, does the entire body suffer? If the blood, after passing through the heart, carries to the very extremities the poison with which it is infected, can the members complain, and say to the heart: why dost thou diffuse through us, with the principle of life, the germs of corruption and death? In the physical order, we see that the vicious stream of the parent's blood descends to their children, and propagates among generations disease and shame. Even the defects of character; the imbecilities of the mind, and evil inclinations of the will are often

bequeathed to posterity—a fatal heritage. The laws of nature being constant, why should they not have had their effect in the beginning, as at present? To ask why we partake of the miseries of humanity, is to ask why we are the children of our fathers, the descendants of our first parents: to enquire why effects are traced to their causes, why consequences are the deductions from their premises. Both the material and spiritual world are forced, therefore, to render homage to the dogma of Original Sin.

Death, labor, sorrow, sickness, the dominion which man has a right to exercise over woman,—these are the consequences of Original Sin. But God, in his infinite mercy, cheered and supported the guilty spirit, and wretched condition of our first parents, with the hope of future happiness, and pardon through the merits of Jesus, the promised Messiah, in whom they and their posterity were commanded to believe and trust, in order to be saved. Woman was consoled with the prospect of maternity, adorned with gentleness, and endowed with graces, which captivate man, and soften in him the empire of his authority.

The punishment of original sin in the other life is the privation of the intuitive vision of God. That sin must, then, be washed away, ere the

soul can attain the mansions of bliss. Hence the institution of the Sacrament of baptism in the New Law.

Some similar rite of lustration was practised among most nations. By the Romans it was styled *Lustricus*, from the lustral water used for the purification of the new-born. Among the Persians, it also prevailed: and VOLTAIRE justly remarks, "that it was common to all the ancient nations." "The fall of degenerate man," he adds, "is the foundation of the theology of all those nations."

CHAPTER XIII.

FREE WILL — ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

When God moulded the first man out of the clay, and breathed a soul into his nostrils, He conferred upon him the faculty, the power, of acting according to his free will. Our own intimate sense, the voice of reason, the evidence of revelation, and the unerring authority of the Church, give testimony of the liberty of the human will. In so much, that no man, "except him who has lost his reason," in the language of St. Augustine, "can call it in question." And Fenelon adds: "Is it not certain that the strange philosophy that denies free will in the schools, holds it indisputable in the bosom of families, and would be as implacable against individuals who should attempt to violate the social virtues of home, as if it had maintained this dogma under all circumstances."

Free will necessarily implies future punishments. It creates accountability to Him who bestowed it. Bayle has well remarked, that the innocent man who has been miserable on earth cannot be destined for annihilation by the Creative Intelligence. Epicurus, if persuaded of an-

nihilation, evinced, nevertheless, some inquietude concerning what was to come after him.

Passing over the convictions expressed on this subject by the ancient Philosophers, (for instance, Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Seneca, &c. &c.,) let us consult those of more modern times.

"I clearly know," writes the Marquis D'Argens, "*that God could not be the author of evil:* and if He permits it, it must be because it is necessary. I do not trouble myself about anything farther; I avow my ignorance. I confess that I understand nothing of the mysteries of the woes of human kind. But a thing I do not comprehend should not cause me to reject (as was the case with Spinosa) a thing, the truth of which I evidently know. One must be a fool to act in this manner."*

> " . . . . Take human freedom from the world,
> And reft of life and light the gloomy earth
> Is a black sepulchre,—a tomb immense,"

with great propriety and force sings Auguste Barbier.

And Rousseau: "If man is active or free, he acts of himself: all that he does of his free will, enters not into the system ordained by Providence,

* *Tom.* 2.

and cannot be imputed to it. God does not will the evil that man does by abusing his liberty; but He does not prevent him from doing it. He has made him free that he might not do evil, but good, by choice. He has placed him in the condition to make this good choice, by a proper use of his faculties. But He has limited his powers in such a manner that the abuse he makes of them does not injure the general order. The evil that man does falls back upon himself without, in any manner, changing the order of the world. To murmur because God does not prevent evil, is to murmur at that which he has done by the excellency of man's nature, that He has attached to his actions a morality that ennobles him, and that he has given him a right to virtue. We are tempted by the passions, and restrained by conscience. What more could Divine Providence do in our favor? Could He have put a contradiction in our nature, and bestow a reward upon him who acts well without having the power of acting ill? What! to prevent man from being wicked should He have given him nothing but instinct, and made him a brute? It is the abuse of our faculties that renders us bad and miserable. Our troubles, our prosperity, our pains, proceed from ourselves. Moral evil is our work, and

physical evil would be nothing without our vices, which have rendered them sensible."*

"The free will of man," says MARMONTEL, "has been contested; reason has been reduced to silence, by maintaining, that in him, as well as in all nature, every thing is ruled by the law of majesty. Nevertheless, every one, even the Fatalist himself, does not fail to act with the full persuasion of his freedom, convinced that his will exercises about him a free influence. All rules of conduct, all laws, all personal affection,—esteem and contempt, praise and blame, friendship and gratitude, resentment and revenge,—all suppose the intimate persuasion that man is free, in good or evil. These are what are called truths of sentiment, truths which are not in the mind, but the heart; truths which nature teaches man, &c."†

"We know demonstratively," VOLTAIRE affirms, "that God is free; and that He knows every thing. But this pre-knowledge and omniscience are equally incomprehensible to us as His immensity, His infinite duration past, and His infinite duration future; as the creation of the universe, and all other things which we cannot deny or know. The dispute concerning the foreknowledge of God has caused so much wrangling only

* *Emile* † *Contes Moraux.*

on account of our ignorance and presumption. What does it cost to say: I know nothing of God's attributes, and I am not made to comprehend his essence."*

Again:

"The God who made us, made us not in vain,
His seal divine has stamped the front of man.
What He ordains I cannot fail to know,
He gave me law, and being, here below.
The harmonies of time and place proclaim—
To endless ages, God's most holy name."

And again:

"All have intelligence, received from Heaven,
With which the curb of conscience has been given.
The earliest fruit of dawning reason, when
First heard and understood, it teaches men;
Designed a counterpoise severe to be
To the heart's promptings, subject, yet born free.
A weapon nature places in our hands
Which by our high-born love self-interest withstands."

* *Tom.* 1, *p.* 40.

CHAPTER XIV.

CREATION OF BRUTES.

The instinct of Brutes is altogether different from the intellect of the human Soul. Yet it cannot be *material.* It must, therefore, be a kind of middle substance between mind and matter, without partaking of one or the other. An *immaterial substance*, endowed with sensibility, devoid of intelligence, incapable of moral action, destined to experience in the body it inhabits a longer or shorter period of misery or happiness, and to concur, in some manner, to the general well-being of visible nature. What becomes of it after the dissolution of the body it animated; whether it is immediately annihilated, or whether it is preserved, after the dissolution of one body to animate another similar one, and form another individual animal of the same species, it has not been given to us to determine.

This instinct is more or less perfect according to the different species of Brutes. It is susceptible of various affections, capable of feeling sensible objects, but incapable of shewing their insensible relations.

Intellect examines, judges, analyzes an object; instinct merely feels its presence, and causes it to be perceived.

Instinct has nothing in common with human reason. Yet there is in men an instinct which is always followed by intelligence, which observes and examines, which checks or impels, which approves or condemns: whereas among brutes instinct is always a blind and necessary power, without principle to direct it, without light to illumine it, without reason to judge, condemn, or approve.

The instinct of animals causes them sometimes to perform wonderful things, which might almost lead us to suspect that it is allied to intelligence. But it is easy to remark that this intelligence is of a subaltern nature, and has no relation with that of man. Man perfects his lights, passes from one knowledge to another, seizes the connexion and proportion of the means to the end, apprehends the relations of things sensible and insensible. The beast possesses nothing of this faculty.

Some Naturalists, and Buffon among others, remark, that of all animals the Dog has the most importance in the order of nature.

"The Dog," he remarks, "independently of the beauty of his form, the vivacity, force, and sup-

pleness of his movements, possesses, by excellence, all the interior qualities calculated to attract the attention of men. The dog, in his wild state, is ferocious, choleric, and redoubtable to all other animals. But this ardent and sanguinary nature yields, in the domesticated dog, to sentiments the most gentle and to the pleasure of wining our attachment. He comes crouching at the feet of his master, and there lays aside his native independence, courage, energy, and dispositions. He awaits his orders, consults him, supplicates him. A glance of the eye is sufficient; he understands the signal of his will. Without having, like man, the light of thought, he has all the warmth of sentiment, he has more fidelity and more constancy in his affections; no ambition, no desire of revenge, no interest, no fear but that of displeasing him. He is all zeal, all ardor, all obedience. . . . .

"More docile than man, more supple than any other animal, the dog not only is instructed in a short time, but conforms to the manners, movements, and habits of those who command him. He takes the tone of the house he inhabits. Like other domestics, he is disdainful when among the great, and rustic with the peasant. In the school of the Religious of Mount St. Bernard,

like them he becomes hospitable. Always eager about his masters, and obliging to their friends, he is himself the born friend of the traveller. He runs before him, caresses him, entices him on, but pays no attention to indifferent persons, and goes so far as to declare openly against those who, by their condition, are made only to importune. He knows them by their dress, their voice, their gestures, and prevents them from approaching. His actions, his movements, are those of an animal whose instinct is elevated to the highest degree to which the Creator permits it to attain; to an intelligence which is not that of man. . . . . The eyes of the Alpine dog express the desire to anticipate the thought of man. . . . . If the dog did not exist, how could man have conquered, tamed, and reduced to servitude the other animals? How could he now discover, pursue, and destroy wild and pernicious beasts? . . . It was necessary first to gain over the dog. The first art of man has been the training of this powerful auxiliary, and the fruit of this art is the conquest and peaceable possession of the earth. Faithful to man, the dog will always hold a part of the empire over the other animals. He commands them himself. He reigns at the head of a flock of sheep, he makes himself better understood than

the shepherd. Safety, order, and discipline are the fruits of his vigilance and activity. It is a people that is subject to him, whom he guides, protects; and against whom, if he were not badly trained by an ignorant and cruel subaltern guardian, he would never employ force but to maintain peace."

That the instinct of animals differs from human reason, HOBBES bears testimony in these terms: "The latter, always perfectible, advances by infinite progress: the other, rapidly formed, soon receives its entire perfection. Reason leads us gradually towards its object; instinct rushes at it and grasps it. Among animals, every species attains, in a few days, the term assigned for it. Its measure of good is soon filled up, and its being completed pauses forever at the same point. Ages have added nothing to their knowledge: they only repeat the same actions, and neither the sphere of their desires nor that of their enjoyments, ever grows wider. Man, should he endure as long as the sun, will always go on learning some new truth, and will die thirsting for science."

FLOURENS, a modern member of the Academy, affirms that "in animals there are two forces: a kind of intelligence, that is to say a force which

instructs and modifies, and a blind and mechanical force, which is instinct."*

If we believe DESCARTES, animals have no ideas; and consequently cannot reason. But facts contradict this theory. For when a dog sleeps and barks while asleep, it proves that he has sensations, and that these sensations awaken ideas in his mind. The idea of the partridge that flew from the hare that pounced at her, troubles her sleep. It may be said that these ideas are material, that they proceed not from metaphysical principles. But I should like to know how an idea can be material. "The Elephant," writes BUFFON, "approaches man in intelligence as nearly as *matter* may approach *mind*." But LOCKE is of a different opinion: while he perceives an essential difference between man and the beast, he affirms that beasts reason, and reason upon particular ideas, but in a limited way, not having the faculty of understanding abstractions.

"This opinion of Locke is very probable," adds FLOURENS; and he concludes a very learned and interesting work on this subject in these words: "Man, white in Europe, black in Africa, yellow in Asia, and red in America, is but the same man tinged with the color of the climate. Man is one."

* *Hist. des trav. et des idées de Buffon.*

CHAPTER XV.

CHILDREN OF ADAM AND EVE — THE DELUGE.

THE first born of Adam and Eve was Cain, whose name signifies *possession;* the second Abel or *vanity.* Both were taught to worship their Creator, and offer Him sacrifice. Their history is too well known to be here repeated. Cain was the image of the Jews immolating Christ on the cross; Abel the type of the Redeemer, dying for the salvation of mankind.

The third son was named Seth, or *re-placed,* a man of peace and piety, but whose posterity, by coming in contact with the descendants of Cain, became perverted. Out of their unnatural intercourse sprang the Giants of the earth, not so famous for their great stature, as for the enormity of their crimes.

The fourth son was styled Enos, or *religious,* who devoted his life to the perfecting the morals of his brethren, established public worship, drew the distinction between clean and unclean animals, and laid the foundation of the Jewish law.

Enos had a son named Cainan, or *lamentation;* Cainan begat Malaleel, or *praise to God.* From

Malaleel sprang Jared, or *governing*, and from him Henoch, or *dedication*, a faithful observer of the laws of God. Down to the moment when Henoch disappeared from the world, the morals of the descendants of Seth continued to be pure: and they were styled the children of God.

"The Bible," remarks CHATEAUBRIAND, "is not only the real history of ancient days, but, likewise, a figure of modern times. Each fact is double, and contains in itself *an historical truth*, and a *mystery*." And the Abbé GENOUDE: "In the scripture all is animation—everything speaks—has a voice. God, who inspires the Prophets, sheds before their eyes a light wherewith they see the movements and life of the universe. Gesner has written a celebrated poem on the death of Abel, which contains many graceful traits of pastoral life: . . . . but it falls far short of the model from which he copied it."

When the iniquities of men overspread the face of the earth, and God was forgotten by his ungrateful creatures, He resolved to avenge His majesty, and punish their wickedness in the most signal manner. Accordingly He let loose the cataracts of Heaven, and destroyed, with the exception of Noah and his family, the whole human race, by the deluge.

That the deluge was universal is admitted by all nations: the Persians, Chinese, Arabians, Turks, Moguls, Babylonians, and Africans.

This fact is admitted and believed by the most learned geologists, among whom stands pre-eminent the immortal CUVIER.*

With regard to the longevity of the antediluvian race, it cannot be denied. The fact rests on testimony too strong to be shaken. The first is that of Moses. Now putting aside the inspiration and gravity of such a witness, he is, nevertheless, universally acknowledged to be the most ancient historian, and consequently of greater weight than all posterior historians, whose negative testimony is not sufficient to counterbalance his.

The second testimony is that of pagan writers. Homer complains that the life of mortals, in his day, had grown much shorter than it had formerly been. Josephus cites Hesiod, Hecateus, Hellanicus, Arcesilaus, Ephorus, and Nicholas of Damascus, to prove that the first men lived many centuries. The same conviction is found among the Egyptians, Indians, and Chinese.†

* Consult his *Discours sur les revolutions de la surface du Globe*, and the *Nouveau Traité des Sciences Geologiques*, by Jehan, &c. &c. † See *Desdouits* 3. *Soirée de Monthery.*

The tradition of the deluge is preserved, as was remarked above, by all nations, and is recorded in the most ancient writings that are known. The Cosmogonic poems of India, Persia, China and Scandinavia mention it. The mythological records of Rome and Greece perpetuate the memory of it. We read in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid the history of the creation and deluge, such as the Romans had received from the Greeks. And the Abbé GENOUDE has justly remarked, "If you compare this history, filled with all the ornaments with which profane genius decorates it, with the simple and majestic recital of Genesis, you will see the lustre of pagan poesy fade away before the divine rays that illuminate the Prophets."

I will finish this topic with the following declaration of CUVIER: "On examining what is passing on the surface of the globe, since it was made dry for the first time, and the continents that have taken their actual forms, or at least in their more elevated parts, we see clearly that this last revolution, and consequently the establishment of our actual societies, cannot be very ancient. This is one of the results, at the same time the best proved and the best attended to, of sound geology. A result the more precious, because it unites, by an uninterrupted chain, both natural and civil history."

CHAPTER XVI.

TOWER OF BABEL — IDOLATRY — ORIGIN OF KINGS.

THE descendants of Noe (who had three sons, Sem, Cham, and Japhet,) increased to such an extent in a few years, that it became necessary for them to separate, and scatter themselves over all the earth. But before their separation they agreed to build a city (Babylon,) and erect a tower, the top of which should reach to the clouds. Their object was to render their name famous, and perhaps to prepare a refuge in case of another deluge. But the fate of this design is well known. The tower was styled Babel, or *confusion*, in consequence of the confusion of tongues which followed its destruction. From this period dates the formation of the various languages: Chaldaic, Syriac, Arabic, &c. &c.

Men, when they separated, carried with them the remembrance of past events, and the principal truths which God had revealed. But ere long they forgot them all; gave themselves up to abominable excesses, and, forsaking the worship of the Lord of the universe, adored the sun,

moon, stars, animals, and imaginary beings. Hence Boileau:

> "Art fashioned gods of silver, gold, and brass,
> The artisan himself prostrate, alas!
> Before the metal which his hands had made
> For wisdom there, and health, and fortune prayed.
> The world was filled with gods of every kind:
> Then was the race who drank the Nile so blind
> That serpents, fishes, monsters, they adored,
> To dogs and cats gave sacrifice, implored
> Garlic, and onion: which as gods they feared,
> Though from the fumes of their own gardens reared."*

In descending, by tradition, from father to son, the history of the deluge degenerated into a fable. Noe was transformed into Saturn, and his three sons were named Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto, among whom the empire of the world was divided by their father. Because Noe had been rescued from the universal deluge with his family, Saturn was symbolised by a ship, and he and Rhea, his wife, were said to have been born of Oceanus and the goddess of the sea, named Thetis. Because the Patriarch had seen the two worlds—the antediluvian and the renovated—Janus was imagined with two faces, the one of an old man, the other of a young. And as he discovered the use of the

* *Sat.* xii.

grape, with the juice of which he became inebriated, a Deity of intoxication was invented under the name of Bacchus.

Down to the deluge, no individual attempted to invest himself with sovereign power. Each one lived peacefully, and governed his own family. All authority was then paternal, and did not extend beyond the limits of the fire-side. After the deluge, men became jealous of one another, unjust, and agitated by discord. They who were most distinguished for moderation were selected as arbiters in cases of dispute, and by their decision the disagreeing parties were willing to abide. Their judgment was held sacred, in the absence of laws, and to them the people were taught to look as exercising a sway, which in process of time extended wider and wider, and became more and more consolidated, until they began as it were to reign; and *such was the origin of Kings.*

Japhet peopled the northern parts of Asia, all Europe, and a great number of the adjacent islands. Chanaan, the son of Cham, took possession of Palestine, afterwards the promised land. The rest of the race of Cham occupied Syria, Arabia, Egypt, and Africa. Sem remained with Noe, in the east, and spread his domination from the Euphrates as far as the Indian Ocean.

CHAPTER XVII.

ABRAHAM — SODOM — ISAAC — JACOB — JOSEPH — MOSES.

THARE had three sons: Abraham, Aran, and Nakor. Abraham, with his wife Sarah, and his nephew Lot, repaired to the land of Chanaan, where he raised an altar to the Most High. Afterwards Lot returned to Sodom, where he was made prisoner by the four Kings of Chordolahomor, who laid waste that country. Abraham, at the head of four hundred men, routed those marauders and rescued Lot. It was on this occasion, that Melchisedeck, the mysterious Pontiff-King of Salem, made his appearance, blessed Abraham, and offered bread and wine in sacrifice to the God of armies. Sodom was reduced to ashes, and over the site on which it stood now sleeps the *dead sea*.

Isaac was born in a miraculous manner, his mother Sarah being at the time of his birth ninety-nine years old. The command given to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, and the admirable submission of the victim to the will of Heaven, are too well known to be here repeated in detail. Suffice it

to say, that he was a figure of the "well-beloved Son" of God who died on a cross for the salvation of the world. Josephus puts into the mouth of Abraham a long soliloquy, when about complying with the command of the Eternal. Moses makes him observe profound silence, and preserves it himself. "One," remarks ROLLIN, "wrote as a man and inspired by his own genius; the other was but the instrument, the pen, of the Holy Spirit who dictated all his words." And Fleury observes, that in the description of this sacrifice by Moses, all the important events are described as if they were occurring under our eyes. "You find in it every thing that touches: while the author does not admonish you that you ought to be touched. This is the historical style of Scripture."

Isaac married Rebecca, and went into Chanaan. This marriage affords us a beautiful model of the simplicity of the ancient patriarchal manners: manners yet to be found in the east, under the tents of the wandering tribes of Arabia Petræa and Lower Syria. Travellers through those countries meet with the same hospitality. The Arab receives the stranger at his door, introduces him into his family, washes his feet, and invokes upon him the blessing of heaven. Lamartine and

Chateaubriand have described, with an inexpressible charm, their pilgrimages through the desert.

Abraham had seven sons. The two eldest were Ismael, born of Agar, and Isaac, born of Sarah: this latter had two, Esau and Jacob; from the latter the Messiah was to spring; the descendants of the former were to form a people apart. The twelve sons of Jacob were the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel: of which, that of Levi was to furnish the Priests of Religion, and from that of Juda, Christ the Messiah, was to draw his origin.

Every reader is familiar with the pathetic story of Joseph. There is in Homer a circumstance which vividly resembles the discovery of Joseph to his brethren. Ulysses, concealed in the house of Eumea, makes himself known to Telemachus. Chateaubriand has seized upon this resemblance to institute a comparison between Homer and the Bible.

Sixty-four years after the death of Joseph, Khevres, or Pharaoh II, mounted the throne of Egypt, and commenced a sanguinary persecution against the Hebrew people. Every new-born son of that race, he ordered to be thrown into the Nile. Among these (but fastened in a basket by the humanity of his nurse) was the child who was

rescued by the daughter of the cruel King, and received the name of Moses, which signifies *saved from the water.* This infant was destined to break asunder the chains which fettered his nation in the land of Egypt, and to lead them forth, amid signs and wonders, "from the house of bondage."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MOUNT SINA — THE PROMISED LAND — JOB — RUTH.

RELIGION—that is, the worship of God, was, since its origin in the natural law, first publicly announced and defined, on Mount Sina, situate near the Red Sea. The precepts were engraved on twelve stones. Besides which there were other laws, relative to the ceremonies of divine worship and the conduct of life. The tables and book of the law were preserved in a box, called the *ark of alliance*, which was confided to the care of Aaron, the Sovereign Pontiff.

After the publication of religion, the Israelites resumed their march, and arrived on the confines of the land of Chanaan. Before entering it, a deputation of twelve men, representing the twelve tribes, was sent to explore it: among whom were Caleb, signifying *the heart*, and Josue, *the aid of God.* All, with the exception of these two, made a frightful report to their brethren. They had seen giants who were ready to devour them, and the new country could not compare with the fertile plains of Egypt from which they had come.

Moses prayed for the people, erected the brazen serpent (emblem of the cross of Christ,) but had not the consolation to lead them into the promised land: in sight of which he died on Mount Abarim. That privilege was bestowed by Heaven on Josue.

The law published on Sina was temporary. On the appearance of the Messiah, it was to be abrogated. He was to publish another, and Him all the people of his day were commanded to hear and believe.* As long as Josue governed, and the ancients lived who had witnessed the power of God in their behalf, the people persevered in his worship. Afterwards their children degenerated into idolatry; in punishment of which crime, they were made slaves by the neighboring kings, as well as by the Mesopatamians, Moabites, Chananeans, Madianites, Amalecites, Ammonites, and Philistines. When Israel repented, God raised up men to deliver her from persecution. These were the Judges; who governed from the death of Josue to the reign of Saul, the first king.

The Philistines, having again declared war against the Israelites, the contest was to be decided between Goliah and David—the former a giant, the latter a shepherd boy. The result is

* Deut. xviii.

known. And after the death of Saul, David was raised to the throne. Under his victorious sway, the empire of Israel extended from the desert to Laban, and from the Euphrates as far as the sea. His son Absalom, seconded by Architopel, revolted against him. But David conquered, and was carried in triumph to Jerusalem. Absalom did not go unpunished. For, in the words of DUCHE:*

"Passing with speed, beneath the fatal oak,
His hair, whose ornamental tresses long
Streamed from his head, a woful ornament,
Caught in the branches tangled: for some time,
He trusted in his strength—but o'er him fell
His locks dishevelled, and his body hung
Suspended in the air: with terror seized,
His fellow-rebels left him to his fate
And fled. Meanwhile our chiefs his life to spare
Ran to his succor: with the rest I ran—
When Joab in these words accosted me:
Go bear the happy tidings to the King:
The Eternal hath accomplished his designs;
And Absalom hath perished by these hands."

Among the descendants of Nachor, the brother of Abraham, or of Esau, Isaac's son, was, it is generally believed, the patient man of Huss. Job's poetry, according to Dr. BLAIR, is equal,

* *Traged.*

if not superior, to that of the other sacred writers. "What simplicity!" exclaims CHATEAUBRIAND, "what elevation of soul! what divine genius! Compare with his effusions those of Epictetus whose soul naturally vigorous had been indurated by stoicism. . . . Admire, as you may, the Phrygian philosopher; yet how far is he surpassed by the Idumean, who lived in the infancy of the world!"

The story of Ruth is a touching eclogue. A great famine having obliged Elimelech and Noemi to leave Bethlehem, their own country, they entered into that of Moab, and married their two sons with two Moabite virgins, Orpha and Ruth. Ten years after, Noemi, having lost her husband and two children, wished to return to their native land, and besought the widows to go back into the house of their parents. They protested at first, that they would never forsake her. But Orpha changed her mind; while Ruth persisted in her resolution. She followed Noemi to Bethlehem, where they arrived at harvest time: and as they were poor, Ruth went to reap in the field of Booz, who, afterwards, took her as his wife. The fruit of this marriage was Obed, the grandfather of David. Thus did Ruth, by her fidelity and piety, deserve to be the ancestor of the Messiah.

"The history of Ruth," says VOLTAIRE, "is written with touching simplicity. We know nothing in Homer, Hesiod, or Herodotus, that sinks to the heart like the answer of Ruth to Noemi: 'I will go with you, and wherever you will remain, I will remain. Your people shall be my people, your God shall be my God; I will die in the land where you will die!'"

And SALGUES: "The story of Ruth is the most graceful and amiable eclogue in any known language. No where have the details of rural life such charms. No where has the genius of men attached to them a deeper or more tender interest. . . . It has been translated into all languages. By Thompson in England, and by Florian in France. . . . Nothing is more beautiful than this story."

CHAPTER XIX.

SOLOMON — TOBIAS — DANIEL — ESTHER — OSEE — ISAIAH — JEREMIAH — EZEKIEL — JOEL — AMOS — NAHUM — HABACUC — ZACHARY — MALACHY — THE MACHABEES.

THE beginning of Solomon's reign was most glorious. He possessed unprecedented wisdom, and unbounded riches. He built, and dedicated, with prodigious solemnities, the Temple; and throughout the east his reputation had spread as the pride and marvel of his age.

Polygamy was authorised among the Israelites; but they were forbidden to have intercourse with strange women. Solomon, until the period of his violating this precept, had been a wise and religious monarch: after it, his strange wives were almost numberless—Egyptians, Moabites, Idumeans, and Sidonians. And abandoning the worship of his fathers, he erected altars to the goddess of the Sidonians, and the idol of the Ammonites. After a reign of forty years, he died; whether or not penitent for his apostacy and sins, remains a secret known only to the omniscience of God.

Nothing can be more edifying than the history of Tobias. The Holy Scriptures represent him as a personage devoted, from his earliest childhood, to acts of charity. During the captivity of Nineveh, his only study was to console the captives, and bury the dead.

"The two Tobiases," writes Dom Calmet, "whose lives are contained in this book, afford us examples of the rarest and most heroic virtues. . . . Nothing is more pure or sublime than their morality, nothing more excellent than the maxims of their conduct. What more admirable than their fidelity to the law of God, in an idolatrous country, in the midst of their corrupt and dissolute brethren? . . . The firmness of the elder Tobias could never be shaken. His mind was always serene, his heart pure, his understanding enlightened. His instructions to his son are worthy of the Gospel. He was endowed with the gift of prophecy, by which he foresaw the New Jerusalem of which Jesus Christ was to be the founder. In the younger, we see a model of the new alliance, and in his spouse a figure of the Church. . . .

The canticle of Tobias, one of the finest in Scripture, contains two principal parts: the first, thanksgiving, in which he invites all the children

of Israel to unite; the second, prophecy, regarding the chastisement of Jerusalem, and the destruction of that city and of the temple by Nabuchodonozor, which did not come to pass until a hundred years after. . . ."

Among the exiles on the "rivers of Babylon," the most distinguished was Daniel, whom Nebuchodonozor longed to persuade to bend his knees to a newly erected idol. But he remained true to his religion, together with his companions Ananias, Misael, and Azarias. These were thrown into a flaming furnace, but came forth uninjured, singing their celebrated canticle: *All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord.*

The famous festival of Balthazzar, during which were inscribed on the walls the mysterious *Mane Theckel, Phares*, need not here be described anew. It is too well known. After Daniel explained their signification, he became a favorite of the king: in consequence of which he incurred the jealousy of the courtiers, and was cast into the lions' den. The ferocious animals, instead of devouring him, fawned at his feet; and the king acknowledged the power and providence of the God of Israel.

Cyrus, the master of all the east, hearkened to the voice of Daniel, renounced idolatry, and re-

stored to liberty the Jews, who, under the conduct of Zorobabel, prince of the race of David, returned to Jerusalem. And thus ended their captivity.

She whose voice was loudest in appealing to the king in behalf of her persecuted people, was Esther. At the feet of Asshuerus, she obtained the revocation of the edict against Mardochee, and the condign punishment of Aman, the enemy of her religion and her nation.

By his tragedy of *Esther*, Racine has immortalized his name. "It is," says LA HARPE, "truly a master-piece. He is a prophet of Israel writing in French; and in a style with which nothing in that language can compare."

In noticing the other prophets from Osee to Habacuc, I cannot do better than cite the language of the learned and eloquent GENOUDE: "At the head of the minor prophets," he writes, "marches Osee, the most ancient, excepting Jonas. He is vivid, penetrating, and strongly impressed with the characters of poetic composition. He preserves the brevity and conciseness of the sententious style, as St. Jerome has remarked. In reading Osee, we sometimes fancy ourselves pouring over the scattered leaves of the Sybil."

"I look upon Isaiah as the first of all Lyric Poets. Of him may it be said, in the words of Pliny: *He possesses a lofty spirit both in language and thought.* He is not excessive, but grand; not disproportioned, but lofty; not inflated, but magnificent and celestial.*

"His style has all the energy and elevation of Moses, all the sweetness and tenderness of David. . . . Sublime in his prophecies, he preserves an admirable simplicity in the recital of events. His historical narratives are distinguished by a certain rapidity, which neglects all useless details, and dwells on the essential. He relates the most startling events without astonishment or emotion. . . . Of his early life few particulars are known. He tells us that, on a certain day, when in the sanctuary of the temple, his lips were purified by a burning coal applied by a seraph's hand. He appeared at the court of monarchs only to plead for the oppressed. . . . The greatest geniuses of all times have admired the purity of his moral and doctrine: and his predictions of the future are of so striking a character, that St. Jerome did not hesitate to style him the fifth Evangelist."

* Inest acer spiritus cum verbis tum rebus, non immodicus, sed grandis, non enormis, sed altus, non inanis, sed magnificus et cœlestis.

Jeremiah stands at the head of elegiac poetry. His *lamentations* breathe the most affecting and heart-rending pathos. In them, he mourns over the destruction of the temple, the ruin of the holy city, and the fall of the empire, in a strain becoming so sad a subject. The composition, observes Dr. BLAIR, is full of art. The city re-echoes with accents of grief and woe, until, at length, all the people unite in the most ardent and plaintive supplications.

"It is easy," adds TRENEUIL, "to perceive the grandeur that reigns in this composition. It is all life, or rather in the language of BOILEAU:

It has a soul, and body, mind, and face.

Jerusalem is no longer the city ravaged by cruel enemies. She is a tender mother bereaved of her children—a desolate widow. Inanimate beings participate in her sorrows. The Poet endows them with sentiment. The very ways that lead to her are made to weep and mourn. There is nothing in the elegiac style, among the ancients, that can stand any comparison with the *Lamentations*, and above all, the prayer with which they end."

"Ezekiel, like Isaias," writes MICAELIS, "pushes his descriptions to the last degree of

energy. It is impossible for the soul of the reader not to be penetrated with horror, and that kind of horror which is the most powerful effect, and the finish, of art."

The book of Daniel is, as Dr. Lowth remarks, "a simple recital, in the ordinary style, of events which had already taken place, or were to come to pass." When he wrote, the Hebrew language had undergone an alteration in Babylon, and lost all its poetical beauty. Nor is it surprising, that, amid all the calamities of the captivity, the muse of Israel had been deprived of leisure, and fell short, humanly speaking, of poetic inspiration.

Joel differs widely from Osee, in style: but the character of his period and his elocution is not less poetic. His merit consists in elegance, clearness, copiousness, vivacity, ardor. He spreads before the eye, at first, a picture of many miseries, then follows an exhortation to repentance, then the promise of temporal and spiritual blessings to all who do penance, next the re-establishment of the people of Israel, and lastly, vengeance upon their enemies.

Amos, the shepherd-prophet, is said by some critics—and among others St. Jerome—to be without poetry or eloquence. I think differently. He ranks, in my estimation, with the greatest

prophets. He is not less sublime in the elevation of his thought, than in the grandeur of his genius. The same heavenly spirit animated Isaias and Daniel in the courts of kings, and David and Amos on the fields: making use of the eloquence of some, and bestowing it upon others.

Of all the prophets of the second order, none displays the sublimity, ardor, and boldness of Nahum. His prophecy forms a regular and complete poem. The exordium is magnificent, august. The preliminaries of the destruction of Nineveh, and the developement of the particulars of that catastrophe, are painted in the liveliest colors, and with admirable clearness and majesty.

Habacuc has much poetry in his style, especially in his ode, which may be ranked among the most finished compositions of the kind.

"The book of Zachary," says Bossuet, "may be divided into two parts: the first consisting of eight chapters, announces, under divers symbols, the re-building of the temple, the establishment of the government of the High Priests; the abolition of idolatry, and the fidelity of the Jews to the true religion. The second announces more distant events, and contains predictions respecting the Messiah, which have been evidently fulfilled

in Jesus Christ. . . . . What shall I say of the wonderful vision of Zachary, in which he sees the shepherd stricken and the flock scattered? What shall I say of the look which the people of God cast upon their Lord whom they have pierced, and the tears which they shed on account of a death more lamentable than that of an only son, or of Josias II? The prophet foresaw all these things. But the grandest of his visions was that of "the Lord sent by the Lord to inhabit Jerusalem, where he calls upon the Gentiles to unite with his people and dwell in the midst of them."

The last of the prophets is Malachy. We know nothing of his family, or the precise time when he flourished. The word *Malachy* signifies *my angel*, or *my deputed*. "Knowing that he was to be the last of the prophets," writes GENOUDE, "he applied himself particularly to exhort the Jews to be attached to their law, and prepare themselves for the advent of Jesus Christ, the chief of prophets, who was to be announced to them by another Elias.* It is thought that Malachy prophesied after the re-building of the temple, towards the end of the reign of Artaxerxes *Longimanus*, about four hundred and fifty-four years before Christ."

* Chap. iv, v. 5.

"The books of the Machabees," remarks SALGUES, "are of a most noble character, and calculated to elevate the heart, and leave on it the deepest impressions. In them is presented a continual struggle between generous and intrepid fidelity, and base and cruel tyranny. We see religious heroism of the loftiest and brightest nature:—a series of tragedies, it may be said, calculated to afford the pencil of the poet the most pathetic scenes. These books are the last sacred monument of the history of the Israelites. After them, we must have recourse to Josephus."

CHAPTER XX.

THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS CHURCH.

At the period of the birth of Christ, idolatry had spread over the entire earth. The Jews, although they had not abjured the worship of the God of their fathers, were split, nevertheless, into many sects. The Saducees denied the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and consequently, future reward and punishment. The Pharisees led very dissolute lives under the garb of extraordinary rigor. The Herodians believed Herod to be the Messiah. The conviction pervaded all civilized nations, that some great revolution was to occur, at this epoch, in the world, and that Judæa was destined to assume an eminent position among the nations of the earth. Tacitus affirmed that the time had arrived when the east should rule, and from Judæa should go forth the masters of the world.* Suetonius, another Roman historian, expressed the same conviction. Virgil proclaimed the return of the

* *Hist.* lib. v.

golden age, when crime should be diminished, and the serpent destroyed.* Cicero announced an eternal, universal law; a law for all nations and times, and one common master who should be God himself, whose reign was about commencing.†

Volney confesses that the sacred and mythological traditions had spread throughout all Asia—a dogma perfectly analagous to that of the Jews concerning the Messiah. They told of a great mediator, of a filial judge, of a future Saviour, who, King, God, Conqueror, and Legislator, would bring back upon the earth the golden age, deliver it from the empire of evil, and establish the reign of virtue, peace, and happiness.

The books of the ancient Testament contain an infinite number of predictions regarding Jesus Christ: his birth, death, resurrection, ascension; the propagation of His religion, the dispersion of the Jews, and the destruction of the temple. These books were written ages before the birth of the Messiah; all are fulfilled in the person of Christ, and, consequently, prove his divinity, and that of his Church. After the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, on Pentecost-day,

* *Eclog.* 4.

† *De Rep. lib. iii: ap. Lactant. Dei. Inst.* lib. vi, cap. 8.

they began their mission, preaching Christ crucified, indeed, but risen from the dead. Ere long, the whole world was conquered by the Wood of the Cross. The Roman Emperors themselves laid their sceptres and crowns at the foot of that once ignominious, but now thrice glorious, instrument of Golgotha.

"Christianity is said by some visionaries of the present day," remarks RAVIGNAN, "to be the auspicious accomplishment of civilization. This would be only a natural and human fact. It would be to deny the sun, at noon-day, and insult the consciences of the people. A cross, Peter, James, John, and some others—watermen, fishermen, peasants of Galilee—these were the regenerators of the world, whom the prophet announced eight centuries before they were charged to illumine the nations with the burning rays of their word. They speak, those generous soldiers of the crucified one; their voices resound to the extremities of the world. St. Paul astonishes the Areopagus in the name of the cross, Simon Peter plants it at Rome whence it will extend its branches: and Rome will achieve more conquests by that cross, than she did by her armies."

"We see," says CHATEAUBRIAND, "from the commencement of ages, kings, heroes, remarka-

ble men, becoming the gods of a nation. But here is the son of a carpenter, in a little corner of Judea, a model of grief and misery. He is publicly scourged: he chooses his disciples from the lowest ranks of society, he preaches sacrifices, the renunciation of the pomps, pleasures, power of the world..... He overturns the common notions of morality, establishes new relations among men, a new law of nations, new public faith. He, moreover, vindicates his divinity, triumphs over the religion of the Cæsars, sits upon their throne, and succeeds in subjugating the earth. No; though the voice of the world were raised against Jesus Christ, though all the lights of philosophy united against his dogmas, yet never should we be persuaded, that a religion, founded on such a basis, is a human work.....

"The most violent enemies of Christ could not attack his person. Celsus, Julian, and Volusian, acknowledged his miracles: and Porphyry relates that the very oracles styled Him a man illustrious for piety. Tiberius wished to place him among the gods. Adrian reared temples in His honor, Alexander Severus revered Him, and placed his statue between Orpheus and Abraham. Pliny has rendered the highest tribute to the innocence of the first Christians, who followed the precepts and example of the Redeemer.

"His character was amiable, open, and tender; his charity without limits. . . . *He went about doing good.* The power of his soul shone forth from the torments of the cross, and his last sigh was the sigh of mercy."

FENELON calls our attention to two palpable considerations: the first, that the epoch designated by the Jews for the appearance of the Messiah is past: that they can no longer compute the times, and are bewildered in their calculations, like travellers who have lost their way. The other, that Jesus Christ bears the impress of the Messiah: He has gathered the Gentiles around his person. He has formed but one people from so many barbarous and idolatrous nations. He has broken their idols to pieces: Europe is full of Christians: and there is no kingdom in which they are not to be found. From the point where the sun rises, to where it goes down,—in the two hemispheres—Jesus is offered to God, a spotless victim, for the remission of the sins of men.

There are not wanting some philosophers of our age, who accept religion merely as an eclectic and rationalist system, and as a lever of moralization for the ignorant people. But they wish it to be inert in regard to errors and vices: they make it a veritable utopia; and if they do not

openly declaim against it, they are silent only by policy and dissimulation. BOLINGBROKE was compelled to acknowledge, that there is no system so simple and plain as that of religion, as found in the Scripture. "It is the true system of natural religion, and it would always have been of great advantage to the human race, if it had always been spread with the simplicity with which Jesus preached it. This Christian system of faith and practice has been revealed by God Himself, and it is equally absurd and impious to affirm that the Divine Wisdom has revealed it in an incomplete and imperfect manner. Its simplicity and clearness prove that it is intended to be the religion of mankind, and, at the same time, shew the divinity of its origin."

Another distinguished writer (MALENÇON) has well remarked, that "if the religious system—moral and political—animated all kings, all nations would be happy." And FIELDING: "The Gospel offers to all nations a constitution in one single article: *love thy neighbor as thyself.* The propagation of the Gospel has banished barbarism, and there are those who would extinguish the Gospel! One page of the Scripture is more powerful, to teach us how to die, than all the volumes of philosophers."

Hear the sentiments of ROUSSEAU: "Shun those who, under pretext of explaining nature, sew in the hearts of men the most desolating doctrines; and whose skepticism appears a hundred times more positive and dogmatic, than the decided tone of their adversaries. Under the haughty pretext of being the only enlightened, sincere, and upright men, they would force upon us their imperious decisions, and palm upon us as truthful principles, the unintelligible systems which they have formed in their imaginations. Destroying, trampling under foot all that men respect, they rob the afflicted of the last solace in misery, take from the powerful and rich the only curb to their passions; tear from the depths of the heart all remorse for crime, all the hopes of virtue, and, yet, boast of being the benefactors of human kind.... Happy the man who lives under the holy yoke of religion, he will, one day, reign in the Kingdom of Heaven!...

"One of the sophisms most familiar to the philosophistic party, is to contrast a people of good philosophers with a people of bad Christians. As if it were more easy to form a people of true philosophers than of true Christians. I do not know whether among individuals one may not be as easily found as the other; but I well

know, that when there is question of a people, we must suppose as many who would abuse philosophy without religion, as now abuse religion without philosophy. . . . . .

"Our modern governments owe, incontestably, to Christianity the most solid authority, and less frequent and less sanguinary revolutions. This is proved by comparing them with the ancient governments. Religion, rightly known, dispels fanaticism, and gives a sweetness to Christian manners. *This change is not the work of letters;* for, humanity has not been the more respected wherever they have flourished. Of this fact, Athens, Egypt, imperial Rome, and China bear testimony. What works of mercy have been produced by the Gospel? What restitutions does it cause to be made among Catholics? How many reconciliations and what alms-deeds are the result of preparation for Confession and Communion?"

With reason and beauty does CHAMFORT exclaim:

"Daughter of Heaven, by all the world adored,
By all men feared, or else by all implored:
Divine Religion! shedding from above
Among the paths of men thy rays of love;
That bright and sacred chain to us make known
Which God's own hand hath fastened to this throne,
Binding the earth to heaven—and before
Thy altars balancing the globe . . . . ."

"The most powerful bond," writes D'ALEMBERT, "to which all Europe owes the species of society which has been perpetuated in her members, is Christianity. Contemned from her birth, she has served as an asylum for her detractors; after they had so cruelly and vainly persecuted her. The Roman Empire found in her resources, which it had not in its strength: her missions were more valuable than her victories. She sent her bishops to repair the faults of her generals, and triumphed, by her priests, when her soldiers were beaten. It is thus that the Franks, Goths, Burgundians, Lombards, and a thousand others, recognised the authority of a government which they had conquered, and received, at least in appearance, with the gospel-law, that of the prince who caused it to be announced to them. Some pretended philosophers assert that Christianity is irksome. By this they acknowledge that they are incapable of bearing the yoke of the virtues she enforces. . . . And they shut their eyes to the manifest benefits which she bestows upon society. Her duties exclude those of the citizen, others object. This is a calumny, since the first of her precepts is to fulfil the obligations of one's state of life. She favors despotism, and the arbitrary power of princes, insist others. This is a misap-

prehension of her spirit, since she declares in the most energetic terms, that sovereigns shall be judged at God's tribunal more severely than by men, and that they shall repay with usury what they have enjoyed upon earth. Faith requires that Christianity should contradict and humble reason, it is again urged. This is to insult experience and even reason; for that yoke cannot be humiliating which supports reason, ever vacillating and inquiet, when left to itself. What, then, will become of the world? What will become of those who are swayed by the sweetness of her consolations, the attraction of her hopes, the inestimable compensation she offers the wretched. . . . This, especially, in the inequality of conditions, in the disproportion of fortunes, in the inexact distribution of honors and rewards, that this religion evinces the sweetness of her empire, and the wisdom of her laws, which temper and counteract, as far as possible, all human adversities. As the order of society demands subordination, dependence, fatigue; as human corruption acts with a general and particular influence, upon the affections, upon pains, labors, oppressions, injustices; what man could submit to a distribution of sorrows so cruel to nature, without the light that shews him how to support the bitterness of

his lot, without a counterpoise which represses the ebullitions of acute feeling; without a law of submission which induces him to accept from superhuman motives, everything that can affect the pride of his mind, or the sensibilities of his heart. Evil, in the eye of a Christian, is but of a passing nature. Evil, in the philosopher's estimation, is but a sting to his malice, a subject of revolt, a motive of injustice and iniquity."*

MONTESQUIEU is not less explicit in his admiration of the Christian Religion: "While the Mahommedan chieftains," he writes, "inflicted death continually and were put to death themselves, religion, among Christians, rendered princes less timid, and consequently less cruel. The prince relied on his subjects, and his subjects on the prince. Admirable theory! religion which seemed to have in view only the felicity of the future life, confers happiness upon us here. She, despite the power of the empire and the insalubrity of the climate, prevented despotism from being established in Ethiopia, and has carried into the bosom of Africa the manners and laws of Europe. Let us place before our eyes, on one side, the continual massacres of kings and the chief of the Greeks and Romans, and on the other,

* *A l'Imperatrice de Russie.*

the destruction of people and cities by the chieftains Timar and Geniskan, who devastated Asia, and we will find, that we owe to Christianity a certain political right, and in war a certain right of nations, for which human nature cannot be too grateful. True Christians would be citizens infinitely enlightened respecting their duties, and would have an ardent zeal to filfil them; they would feel well the rights of natural defence. The more they would believe they owe religion, the more would they be convinced they owe their country. The principles of Christianity, deeply engraven on the heart, would prove infinitely stronger than the false honor of monarchs, the human virtues of republics, and the servile fear of despotical States."*

Diderot has not hesitated to add his tribute in favor of Christianity to that of Montesquieu: "The first Christians," he says, "were strangers to all violence. They took from the master all the rigor of authority, softened slavery, and rendered submission voluntary. Their precepts permitting only a transient use of the goods of life, recommended detachment from wealth to the rich, and a distribution of it among the poor. Meekness, moderation, humble modesty, patience, were no less

* *Esprit des Lois.*

earnestly enforced towards all men. In the primitive times, the disciples of this beautiful morality observed it with rigid exactitude. Christianity, if considered only as a merely human institution, was the most perfect. Persecutions proved the heroism of those who embraced it. Their constancy, and purity of morals, made their proselytes."*

GUIZOT has justly observed, that "two sublime powers constitute the happiness of men: *religion* and *philosophy:* with this difference, that under the guidance of religion, we cannot be deceived."

"Christianity," writes RAYNAL, "born amidst the calamities of the Roman Empire, consoled the miserable who took refuge in her bosom. Jesus Christ came upon the earth at a period when the Romans, formerly the masters of the world, had become the slaves of odious tyrants. Persecuted by a Tiberius and a Caligula, a Claudius and a Nero, they required the sweet hope of another life to enable them to bear the trials of this. The people who were ground down on earth by pitiless masters, looked to heaven for an asylum. Religion consoled them, and taught them how to suffer."

* *La Code de la Nature.*

VOLTAIRE contemplating, in his mood of reflection, the beauty and glory of Christianity, breaks out into the following strain:

"What object breaks upon my view!
Lo Christ the powerful, the glorious, too!
Whilst o'er the cloud, all bright,
The standard of his death beams on my sight.
Beneath his feet triumphant Death is trod,
The gates of hell are opened at his nod:
The oracles announced his reign,
His throne is circled by the martyr-train,
And by their blood cemented; wheresoe'er
The saints have left their footprints, miracles appear.
Greater his promises than their desires,
His life a pure morality inspires.
He soothes in secret, and illumes the heart,
And gives a heavenly balm for ev'ry smart."

Again he says: "We have seen idolatry disappear at the moment the Gospel was preached. That same light caused all bloody sacrifices, in the world, to cease. It corrected our jurisprudence, . . . and abolished slavery. Let it not be said that reason would have sufficed to destroy those extravagances. Reason did nothing for the destruction of idolatry. . . . Consider the happy effects of this light of the Gospel, not only inasmuch as it illumines, but in constituting the happiness of humanity, and the consolation of mankind.

They who have combatted this religion must, at least, acknowledge, that it announces truths from which results the felicity of the human race. Its practice is founded upon indulgence and kindness. A God, adored by the heart and mouth, and all duties fulfilled, make a temple of the universe, and brothers of all men."

MARMONTEL writes: "We adore in Jesus Christ his holy humanity, indissolubly united to his divinity. . . . History has depicted men excellent for some virtue. Philosophy boasts of some; Eloquence has celebrated some, Poesy has imagined some: but a character as astonishingly perfect as that of Jesus Christ was never traced, even in the most fabulous fiction of the poets."

"The more I contemplate the project conceived, undertaken, accomplished by Jesus Christ," remarks DUVOISIN, "the more I feel the necessity of recognizing something more than human. But penetrate more deeply into the conduct and sentiments of that extraordinary man. Read his Gospels. He there paints himself in his works and discourses. There the witnesses of his public life, in their simple narrative, have traced, without, perhaps, perceiving it themselves, a character never to be equalled; uniting in one personage all the lights and virtues which we admire in the

wisest and most virtuous men of antiquity. And what adds to our astonishment is, that this character so perfect and so singular, that he seems placed beyond the sphere of humanity, received all his perfection in a very short life; at an age when the sages of antiquity were accustomed to enter upon the career of philosophy. He developes of a sudden, without having been formed by education, by study, by the knowledge of the world. In the bosom of an ignorant and superstitious nation, from the workman and the artisan, I see him bursting upon the world as a teacher of religion and morality, to whose doctrine the human mind has added nothing for eighteen centuries. There is no virtue of which Jesus has not given the precept, and been the model: and he alone, among all legislators and teachers of morality, instructs better by his example than by his discourses. All his words, all his actions breathe piety and charity: and a piety and charity until then unknown on the earth."

"If the Apostles were impostors," writes HERMANN JANSSENS, "it would follow, that during eighteen centuries, the greatest part of the world have been duped by their deceptions: that twelve illiterate fishermen have deceived, on the most important subjects, the most learned and virtuous

men in the Christian ages: that millions of martyrs have shed their blood for a false religion, and that, by an absurd supposition and inadmissible hazard, the prophecies of the ancient testament have been adapted, with marvellous exactitude, and in all their details, to the Son of Mary alone. . . . . .

"The first who believed in Jesus Christ were twelve ignorant fishermen, and an infinite number of the populace: but it is false, that all those who, in the beginning, embraced Christianity, were obscure, gross, and low. Not of that description were the centurion of Capharnaum, Lazarus, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Pudens the senator, Flavius Clemens, the Roman consul, Sergius Paulus proconsul, Cornelius the centurion, Epaphroditus, Erastus, several princes of Asia, many of the first officers of Cæsar, without speaking of a multitude of women of the higher classes. Among the learned, were some of the priests and heads of the Synagogue: for instance, Gamaliel and Saul. Also Dionysius the Areopagite, Clement of Rome, Ignatius Martyr, Polycarp, Papias, Clement of Alexandria, Justin, Athenagoras, Hegesippus, Tatian, Irenæus, Theophilus of Antioch, Denys of Corinth, Quadratus, Aristides, Meliton, Origen, Tertullian, &c. &c.

"In a word, all the universe has believed the miracles of Jesus. But the most astonishing of all miracles, or rather a thing impossible, would be, that the universe believed them if they are false, and has been made the dupe of twelve obscure and unlettered fishermen."

CHAPTER XXI.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

The most ancient author, after the inspired penmen, who has written, at some length on the circumstances connected with the death of Christ, is St. Dionysius the Areopagite. In an epistle to Polycarp, the main object of which is to defend himself against a charge of his former friend Apollophanes, viz: that he took an unfair advantage of the testimony of pagan writers in favor of Christianity, he accounts, in the following terms, for the miraculous darkness that covered the world. "Apollophanes," he says, "should remember what happened when we were in Egypt together. We were both near the city of Heliopolis, when, of a sudden, we saw the Moon coming in juxtaposition with the Sun, although that was not the time for such a conjunction, and caused a mighty eclipse. And then, about the ninth hour of the day, we saw her quitting the place she had occupied near the Sun, and resuming her position opposite the diameter. . . . This you may tell him. And you, Apollophanes, deny it if you dare; I

was present with you at that spectacle. And transported at the wonder, Apollophanes, addressing himself to me, cried out: my dear Dionysius, a divine change is taking place."*

In another letter written to Apollophanes himself, after his conversion to Christianity, St. Dionysius says: "I must remind you of what took place at the time we were together at Heliopolis in Egypt. I was then twenty-five years old: you were about the same age. We saw, all of a sudden, on a Friday about the sixth hour of noon, the moon placing herself before the sun, and causing an eclipse that filled us with horror. I asked you what you thought of that eclipse, and your answer shall never be effaced from my memory. You observed: these are then, my dear Dionysius, the changes of divine things. I marked, exactly, the time and year of that prodigy; and having combined all with what Paul afterwards told me, I have surrendered myself to the truth to which you have, also, so happily conformed."*

This testimony is confirmed by that of Phlegon, the freedman of the emperor Adrian, and a pagan. He wrote the history of the Olympiads in sixteen books, from their origin to his time. He declares, that on the fourth year of the two

* *Lib. ii.* † *In Vit. Dion. ap. Cerdel Tom. ii.*

hundred and second Olympiad (which was about the year thirty-three of the Christian era) there happened an eclipse of the sun, the greatest that was ever seen; the darkness being such, that at mid-day the stars appeared in the heavens. He adds that it was attended by an earthquake in Bythinia, which destroyed a great part of the city of Nice."*

Thallus, a Greek historian, records the same fact. At what precise period this Thallus lived, I cannot ascertain: but as he is cited by Justin and Tertullian, he was probably contemporary with Phlegon, if not more ancient. It was to the books of these two authors that Tertullian and the martyr St. Lucian of Antioch, referred the Pagans in proof of the wonderful darkness that spread over the world at the death of Jesus Christ.†

The resurrection of Christ was a palpable fact, which fell under the senses. But there were numberless occasions to verify it. He appeared to his disciples, conversed with them, eat with them. They could not be deceived in the reality, and accordingly, they preached it as the foundation of religion and the proof of his divinity, to

* *Ap. Euseb. Chronic,* pag. 188, ed. Scalig.

† See *Gaume's* Cath. pers. vol. iii, p. 178.

all the nations of the earth. They were not impostors. They had no interest in proclaiming an absurd falsehood; and if they had, they could not have forced it upon the world, or effected, by virtue of it, so universal and extraordinary a revolution. Eighteen hundred years have passed away, and their work remains. When they began their mission, they found the whole world prostrate before idols; minds enthusiastic with philosophy; thrones occupied by superstitious and cruel sovereigns who wielded all their tyrannic power in support of the ancient system, and notwithstanding all these mighty obstacles, they planted the standard of the cross—the banners of Christ arisen from the tomb—in every quarter of the globe. "The glory of having been the Messiah, the true Messiah," says PIERRE LEROUX, "is awarded to Jesus. The effect has been produced, the initiation given, and it is He who gave it. All ages may come and break themselves at the foot of his cross: man will never pass, without respect, by that gibbet, which has been, during so many ages, the beacon of humanity."

"The philosophists," writes SAINT PIERRE, "reject all sorts of religion except that of egotism. Religion, in its general acceptation, is a bond. . . . Religion changes the most melancholy

destinies, by the charm of sentiment. The earth would be a paradise, if the Christian religion were observed."

"A smattering of philosophy," remarks BACON, "banishes religion: a good deal of philosophy brings it back again." This sentiment accords with that of Massillon, who said: "There is in religion a grandeur and elevation to which low and rampant souls can never attain."

The sublime remark of Napoleon to Count Montholon will conclude this subject: "There have been but three great captains in this world: Alexander, Cæsar, and myself. In spite of all their exploits, Alexander and Cæsar are now but a mere theme for school-boys. But who loves them now? So is it with myself: my memory will live perhaps fifty or sixty years, in the heart of some brave; and after that no one will love me more. One only being is still loved on the earth, after eighteen centuries; He is Jesus Christ. Montholon, I know something of men, and I tell you, Jesus Christ was not a man!"

CHAPTER XXII.

DOGMAS AND MIRACLES.

All the dogmas of religion, comprehensible or incomprehensible, are the objects of our faith, and we must believe them on the irrefragable authority of revelation. By mysteries, we understand certain truths, whether eternal or positive, elevated above the sphere of human intelligence, and which must be believed on supernatural motives. If pride reclaim against the existence of miracles, the eye of wisdom sees them everywhere.—Because a thing is incomprehensible it does not follow that it is absurd. In matters of religion, we must examine whether God has revealed the mysterious things she teaches; and when it is proved that God has spoken, man must observe a respectful silence.

By miracles, is understood the interruption of the laws of nature. When, at the bidding of Christ, Lazarus is restored to life, the natural order of things is changed, and a miracle has been performed. "Religious doubts," remarks Massillon, "is the ignorance that adopts them without understanding them; is the vanity that men

pride themselves in, without being able to make it a resource." And BOSSUET: "Mysteries will not frighten the Christian: he understands that all nature being incomprehensible to his weak mind, he should not be astonished at not being able to fathom the secrets of the Divinity. His weakness is turned into strength; his darkness into light; in order to teach him diffidence in himself and docility to God."

The three great mysteries of Christianity are: *the Trinity*, *the Incarnation*, and *the Redemption.* Eighteen hundred years ago, St. John announced, that in *the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, . . . and the Word was made flesh.*

Christ is both God and man. As man He died, as God-man He arose from the grave. "If Christ be not arisen," said St. Paul, "our preaching is vain, and our faith vain."

The Marquess of ARGENS has justly said: "To wish to penetrate mysteries, is a crime, which God has punished by the wandering of the mind."

And BAYLE: "Reason throws everything into confusion. No sooner does it construct a work, than it shews reasons why it should be destroyed. Reason is a real Penelope, destroying at night

the work of the day. Religion need never shrink from reason. If she, sometimes, retires under the entrenchments of faith, it is under the auspices of reason. Nothing would be more false than to imagine that in these cases, reason is given up. We do not entrench ourselves in faith, unless by the most evident maxims of reason. They who admit the Trinity, and the other mysteries of the Gospel, do not renounce reason, but, on the contrary, act upon the axioms of philosophy which have the highest degree of evidence. They rely on the word of God, who cannot deceive or be deceived, and whose word must, consequently, be believed."

"What man has ever denied," says ROUSSEAU, "that God can work miracles? He who calls in question the power of God to change the established laws, should not be punished, but locked up in confinement. Miracles, like prophecies, are like letters of credence which God gives to any one whom he chooses to send as his deputy..... Such a one must say: Mortals, I announce to you the will of the Most High: recognize, in my works, Him who sends me. I command the winds, and they obey me; the billows of the ocean, and they are calmed; the tombs, and they deliver up their prey.... Miracles are the most

proper and striking means that God can make use of to authorize the dogmas He reveals, and to engage men to believe them."

PLATO, long before the introduction of Christianity, had said: "They who admit only what they see and understand, are stupid and ignorant beings."

LITTLETON declared, that "the Jews and Pagans could evade the notoriety of Christ's miracles, only by attributing them to magic, or the power of the devils. Thus, after the Apostles and the Evangelists, the most unquestionable witnesses of the evidence of their truth are Celsus and Julian, and the other ancient adversaries of the Christian religion, who, unable either to contradict or deny the authenticity of the miracles of Christ, were reduced to the necessity of imagining absurd and ridiculous causes of them."

The very ancient book entitled *Sepher toldos Jeschut*, written by a Jew against Christ, in the first century, does not deny that He performed miracles. But let us hear VOLTAIRE: "Miracles were necessary for the rising Church; they are not for the Church now established. God being among men should act as God. For Him miracles are ordinary actions. The master of nature must always be above nature. The miracles of

Jesus Christ and his Apostles are so true, that their influence cannot be weakened by associating them with false prodigies. Let us admire, revere, and celebrate the resurrection of Lazarus, the expulsion of devils from the possessed: the wonderful change at Cana: the precipitation of the evil spirits into the bodies of unclean animals.... Behold Jesus transfigured on Thabor, manifesting his glory to Moses and Elias, who came from the regions of the dead to hear his eternal lessons: Jesus, the source of life: Jesus, the creator of mankind, and the victim for mankind. When He expired the dead arose, and filled the streets of Jerusalem; the sun was eclipsed..... These miracles are numerous, well authenticated, and recorded by men inspired by God. Every judicious reader admits them, every good Christian adores them. The miracles of Christ mark His power and His goodness: as restoring sight to the blind, life to the dead, changing water into wine, and delivering the possessed. They are, moreover, the symbol of some moral truth. When we believe one miracle, we should believe all others, when the same book records them. A book, the moral of which bears the impress of God himself....

"The science of philosophy consists in distinguishing the point when mysteries commence, and its wisdom in respecting them. On whatever side you turn your view, you are obliged to acknowledge two things: your ignorance, and the immense power of the Creator, to whom, certainly, nothing is impossible. Newton being asked why he walked, and how his arms and hands obeyed his will, replied nobly, that he did not know. But, it was urged, you who are so well acquainted with the gravitation of the planets, will be able to explain why they move in one way rather than another. Again he replied, he did not know why. . . . .

"Unmerciful derider, pedagogue of phrases, unfortunate reasoner, you search for the boundaries of your wit; they are at the extremity of your nose!

"Ignorance is the concomitant of human nature: I adore God because I think, without knowing how I think."

CHAPTER XXIII.

FAITH.

FAITH, the daughter of Heaven, must have issued from the bosom of God. Her torch, emiting supernatural rays, was kindled at the source of Eternal Light. She reveals truths which, otherwise, would have been shrouded in impenetrable darkness. Human reason could never discover them. But with her spiritual telescope—to use the expression of an excellent writer—we descry the mysterious attributes of God, we perceive what we must adore, believe, and love. "The grandest things that we know," says St. Chrysostom, "are not derived from reasoning, but from faith. God is everywhere, and yet without parts. What could there be more repugnant to reason? . . . . Acknowledge, then, the darkness in which we are. Every where inevitable contradictions; every where faith is necessary. It alone is firm and solid."*

But how can faith be reconciled with reason? Only by the submission of the latter to the former. "Revelation, at one time," remarks LU-

* *Hom. v, in Ep. ad Colloss.*

ZERNE, "submits its proofs to the investigation of reason, and, then again, subjects reason to the decrees of revelation." And CHATEAUBRIAND: "Prodigious, indeed, is that reason which has shewn us, in faith, the source of all virtues. . . . Reasoning is strong, a poem is divine, a picture is beautiful, only because the eye or mind that judges of them is convinced of a certain truth, hidden in that reasoning, poem, or picture. A small number of soldiers, persuaded of the skill of their general, do wonders. Thirty-five thousand Greeks follow Alexander to the conquest of the world. . . . Columbus, alone in the whole universe, persisted in believing in a new world, and a new world starts from the waves. It was because they *believed*, that Codrus, Pylades, Regulus, performed prodigies. And behold why hearts that believe nothing, which regard as illusions the attachments of the soul, and as folly the most splendid actions, and look with pity on the imagination and tenderness of genius, yes, behold why such hearts achieve nothing great, or generous."

The rationalist would fain make it a mark of weakness and littleness to believe in supernatural truths: whereas, in reality, there can be no real greatness except in faith. Prostrate before the majesty of God, the believer sees His power,

goodness, and justice, through the medium of faith: and his thoughts, mind, and heart, rising infinitely above the earth, soar up to the very heavens, and blend with Eternity.

"The method I have given," writes ROUSSEAU, "may, I think, be of service to those who wish to make use of their reason. But as that natural way of seeking after the truth is extremely difficult; and is, ordinarily, useful only in resolving questions of little importance, and the knowledge of which serves rather to flatter our pride than to perfect our minds, I believe, that the shortest way to discover truth is to be united to God in the most pure and perfect manner: to live as true Christians, to follow, exactly, the precepts of eternal truth . . . *to hearken more to our faith than our reason*, and to tend to God, not so much by our natural strength, which since our fall has ever been languishing, as by the aid of faith, by which God wishes to conduct us into that immense light of truth which will dissipate all our darkness."*

The testimony of BAYLE is not less explicit: "Our theological truths," he says, "are founded on the authority of an infinite Being, who cannot deceive nor be deceived. This is the motive and

* *Dern. ch. Meth. de recherch. la Vérité.*

basis of our persuasion. Let philosophy strive to undermine it as it may; it will be found an impenetrable buckler. . . . Philosophy should yield to the authority of God, and take down its standard in presence of the Scripture.

"There is no faith better established on reason, than that which is established on the ruins of reason. There is no truth more certain than this; the testimony of God is preferable to that of men. If then we conclude, that it is more reasonable to believe rather what God says than what the light of nature dictates, we must abandon what it dictates not in accordance with the holy Scripture. . . . Christianity established in that sense, on the ruins of human reason, is the true Christianity—Christianity the most reasonable.

"When sound reason says one thing, and revelation another, we should close our ears to the voice of reason: thus faith and reason act, by turns, the mistress and the servant. They who would submit to the tribunal of reason revealed truths, do not see, that such a proceeding would be to overturn all the mysteries of the Gospel."*

"The act of the will," says DAMIRON, "whose motive is entire and unvacillating conviction, performs miracles of virtue, of labor, of industry.

* *Reponse aux quest. d'un Provin.* Tom. iii.

Faith removes mountains: in this expression, there is more than a figure. It is a poetical, but faithful, expression of the conquests which man has made over nature, whenever the soul has had that vast and longing desire which is given by ardent, profound, unalterable faith."

GOETHE has solidly remarked, that "if in the sciences doubt is useful, in religion and in morality, it is the poison of the soul. In philosophistic doubt, there is everything doubtful, false, in what is affirmed. Doubt comes from hell."

"Faith is the consolation of the miserable," adds VAUVENARGUES, "and the terror of wordlings." And BACON has truly said: "A little philosophy will make an infidel: but much philosophy is a safe-guard to faith and truth."*

And VOLTAIRE: "When you see reason making such prodigious progress, but only at the moment of the preaching of the Gospel, look upon faith as an ally, that must come to your aid, but not as an enemy whom you should attack. Remember faith is more powerful to persuade than reason, dare to cherish, not to hate it.... There are as many lights in man, as there are mysteries in this life. Faith is the only asylum to which he can have recourse in the darkness of his rea-

* *De Augm. Scient.* lib. 1.

son, and in the calamities of his weak and mortal nature. . . . We are children striving to take some steps without leading-strings; we walk, fall, and faith comes to our relief. . . .

"Rely upon it that one passes very melancholy moments, at the age of eighty, when floating in doubt. Cicero had doubts only: his grand-son and grand-daughter might have learned truth from the first Galileans who went to Rome. But before that time, and since, in any part of the earth which the apostles have not penetrated, each individual must have said to his soul: Who art thou? whence camest thou? what doest thou? No one can know any thing of his own lights, without the assistance of a God."

"I do not deem it necessary," wrote D'Agues-sau to his son, "to admonish you, that the persuasion or conviction of the truths of religion to the certainty of which we can arrive by reasoning and study, should not be confounded with faith, which is a gift of God, a singular grace which He imparts to whom He pleases, and who exacts our gratitude the more, as we owe it entirely to His bounty. . . . But, though this conviction or species of human faith, which is acquired by the investigation of the proofs of the truth of the Christian religion, is of a very inferior order to

divine faith, which is the principle of our sanctification, and though the simplicity of a peasant who firmly believes the mysteries of religion because God teaches them, is infinitely preferable to all the erudition of a scholar, who is convinced of the truth of religion as he is of the certainty of a proposition of geometry, . . . nevertheless, it is very useful to look into attentively, and bring together carefully, all the visible marks with which it has pleased God to clothe and characterize, so to speak, the true religion."

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOPE.

This second theological virtue opens to the eye of the Christian bright and glorious vistas into the future life. The sincere believer, when oppressed with the miseries and sorrows of the world, descries, through the gloom, the termination of his exile, and the beginning of his immortal happiness. Blessed is that man, for he hopes in the Lord: and he who is sustained and animated by such hope, has nothing to fear.

"There is in heaven," says Chateaubriand, "a divine power, the assiduous companion of religion and virtue. By her, we are aided to support life; she embarks with us on the ocean of time and guides to the port when the tempest rages. . . . Although her eyes are covered with a bandage, her vision penetrates the future. Sometimes she holds young flowers in her hands, sometimes a goblet filled with an enchanting liquor. Nothing can compare with the sweetness of her voice, the charms of her smile. The nearer we approach to the tomb, the more brilliantly does

she manifest herself to mortals. Faith and Charity call her sister, and her name is Hope."

VOLTAIRE has elegantly sung of hope, in his *Henriade:*

"God's boundless love, who placed us here below,
Of this brief life to sweeten every woe,
Two beings, 'mongst us, to the earth hath sent,
Soothing companions of our banishment:
The one sweet sleep, the other hope serene.
The one, when man worn down with care hath been,
And his weak body, all relaxed its strength,
And all unstrung its organs, yields at length,
Comes, with a soothing charm, to his relief,
And brings oblivion to fatigue and grief.
The other warms the heart, inflames desire—
* * * * * * * *
But when to favored mortals she appears,
No changing or unfruitful joy she bears:
But aid and promise from Heaven's bright abode,
Pure, solid, and enduring, like her God." *

And SAINT VICTOR:

"O thou, with beauty and with youth adorned,
And crowned with pleasure in life's sunny days,
Come, child of vanity and treacherous goods,
Learn that true happiness dwells not on earth:
Come to the field; beneath the lonely hut,
Stretched on his couch, unpitied, and forgot,
Behold the aged man about to end
His days protracted, and with pain consumed.

* *Chap. vii.*

In vain, upon the wide field, did his hand
The circle of the seasons firmly grasp,
And heap in countless piles the harvest rich.
His pitiless master, each returning year,
Enjoyed the treasures of his industry.
And bore to Paris on a gilded car
The fruits of his laborious toil, repaid,
Too often, with contempt: his life entire
Was but a course of suffering: at this hour,
What gives him strength his heavy lot to bear?
And when, by slow degrees, death cuts the chords
Of this ungrateful life, who will bestow
The guerdon which his virtues have deserved?
Ah! in that wretched cot, religion eyes
His desolation, and enkindles hope:
Hope watches near, sustains him, cheers his grief,
Comforts his soul, and wipes away his tears:
And pointing to a better, brighter world,
Reveals the crown of never-ending bliss,
And wafts him smiling to the gates of heaven."

CHAPTER XXV.

CHARITY.

The third theological virtue embraces the love of God in the first place, and of our fellow-beings in the second. Charity is not that human sentiment which is styled *humanity*. It is a gift of God: it is *grace*, it is *joy*.

The ancient philosophers, who did not know God through faith, longed for a revelation: modern philosophers reject it. But what an inconsistency? Did they possess upright hearts, and were they as humane as they pretend to be, they would acknowledge that religion which ordains the two-fold love of the Creator, and of all intelligent creatures: which condemns the secret evil desires of the heart, and promises an eternal recompense to all who will have shewn mercy towards men, and proved their fidelity to their God, their rulers, and their country.

All the lessons on the subject of philanthropy and benevolence which philosophers and moralists have taught, fall infinitely beneath the precepts contained in the sacred volume.

What is humanity without religion? A natural sentiment, it is true, but a sentiment that manifests itself only on occasions that rarely occur. The irreligious man, if he be humane, will not refuse to assist the miserable being who implores his aid; but the Christian does not content himself with affording solace and relief to those who ask his charity, he will seek out the unfortunate, and carry consolation to those who dare not request it.

"All the mysteries of the Christian religion," observes BAUTAIN, "consist in charity. . . . All the moral of the Gospel is comprised in the word charity. All the perfection of the Christian is found in that one only virtue. For, faith and humility, self-abnegation and hope, only conduct to charity. The end of this fraternal charity among the faithful, and of this devotion to their Master, is to destroy the barriers that separate man from God, and divide men among themselves. It is to unite them in one faith, in one hope, and in one felicity."

"Men," cries out ROUSSEAU, "be humane, be charitable; this is your first duty. Be so towards all conditions, all ages, to all that belongs to human kind. What wisdom can you have estranged from humanity? The opportunity to impart happiness is more rare than is thought; the punish-

ment for not profiting by it is never to meet it again: and the use we make of it leaves either an eternal sentiment of contentment, or of remorse."

It is to the sublime Christian morality that we are indebted for the command to love our neighbor. It has given birth to charity, that divine virtue, without which all other virtues are valueless. It is in the name of charity that woman has been raised to an equality with man: in that same divine name, the chains of bondage have been broken asunder, and men made free! The end of religion, the soul of all virtues, and the abridgment of the law, is charity. On this foundation of charity, according to BOSSUET, "God perfects every state of life. Superiors learn that they are the servants of others, and devoted to their welfare. Inferiors recognise the providence of God in all legitimate power, even when that power is abused. This thought sweetens the pain of subjection, and, under oppressive masters, obedience is no longer oppressive to the true Christian."*

"What is a rich man in the spirit of the world?" asks CAMBACERES. "A man of sport, festivals, theatres, amusements, whose glory consists in being proudly frivolous, whose merit in refusing nothing to the passions: and who put-

* *Hist. Univers.*

ing no limits to his desires except those of his fortune, is great only by his crimes and scandals.

"In the order of providence, a rich man is an angel of peace and consolation, placed between God and his fellow-beings. He is the ambassador from heaven, and, as it were, the apostle of providence, . . . and like the luminary of day, whose brilliant orb speaks of the glory of the Creator to every eye, the rich man, by his charities, speaks to the hearts of all men, and tells of the wisdom and bounty divine.

"What is the poor man, in the estimation of the world? Alas! what colors can depict him! He is an isolated being, proscribed, a sad outcast from all society. . . . He is looked upon with aversion, and approached with disgust. In him humanity has no rights, misfortune no dignity. . . . He becomes ashamed of his existence, and seems, by becoming wretched, to have ceased to be a man.

"In the order of providence, on the contrary, a poor man is, in some sort, the most interesting of his works, and, as it were, the secret of his wisdom, which has rendered the poor precious, and necessary for the rich. Which wishes the rich to be the protectors of the poor, and the poor the saviours of the rich, whom he delivers

from the dangers of riches on earth, by affording them means of converting them into charities, by which they may purchase heaven. . . . . .

"In a word, the rich and poor, in the order of providence, are the contrary of our ideas. The rich are the ministers of it, and the poor the well-beloved. The rich have their orders, the poor their rights: the former to give, the latter to receive. And as that providence entrusts to parents the education of their families, to legislators the government of society, and to kings the administration of empires, so he has made the rich to confide to them the care of the poor. . . . ."

The general rule of charity is not to do evil to any one; to treat all as naturally equal: that is, as our fellow-men. Guided by this rule, the Christian will perform gratuitous acts of benevolence and generosity, and will give shining instances of disinterestedness and magnanimity. In his deeds of philanthropy, he will act with a cheerful and buoyant spirit, and sanctify them by the purest intentions, and loftiest motives.

"Every day," writes BARTHELEMY, "you behold your fellow-citizens groaning under misfortune, some of whom have need of but one word of consolation, and one throb of a heart penetrated with their sorrows. And you enquire

whether you can be useful to men? And you ask whether nature has given us any compensation for the evils with which she afflicts us? Ah! did you only know what delights are shed into those hearts that follow her inspirations. If ever you rescue a deserving man from indigence, dishonor, death, I appeal to the emotions you experience as a witness! You, then, see, that there are in life, moments of sensibility which compensate for years of pain. . . . Fear not the envious; they will meet their punishment in the obduracy of their character, for envy is the rust that eats into the iron. Fear not the presence of the ungrateful, they will fly yours, or rather they will seek it again, if the favors they have received from you be accompanied and followed by esteem and interest. For, if you have abused the authority which you possess, you are guilty, and your protection is blamable. It is sometimes said: he who renders a service ought to forget it, he who receives ought to remember it. And I tell you, that the latter will remember, if the former forgets it. And what if I should be mistaken? Is it from interested motives that we should do good?" *

* *Voyage d'Anacharsis.*

With reason has FENELON declared "that avarice and ambition are the only sources of unhappiness among men." And BAUTAIN: "Egotism is the first cause of every injustice, the root of all the passions and vices, the lever of all crimes, and the source of all the evils that befall humanity. Man does not commit evil for the sake of the evil: but always with the hope that some good will result from his very crime. He is wicked from interest, and all the passions that agitate him, have '*I*' for their starting-point and term.....

"We must admit that in society as we find it, there is but one principle of human actions, viz. *I:* self-interest, egotism disguising itself under all forms, even the most insinuating, but still continuing, in reality, what it is—a serpent. Fain would it hide itself under flowers, and borrow the most brilliant colors; even when it seduces, by its appearances, and fascinates by its charms, its poison is inhaled by the hapless mortal whom it approaches."

Christian charity is the principle of life. *He who loveth not his brother*, says St. John, *remaineth in death. Dearly beloved, love one another. He who loveth not, hath not known God; for God is love.*

CHAPTER XXVI.

INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR WORSHIP — THE EUCHARIST.

The worship we owe to God is that which is styled by theologians *latria*. And although this can add nothing essentially to His glory, it serves to manifest it. From the idea of God, the creator and master of all things, flows the necessity of religious worship: and from the idea of His providence, preserving all things by His power, emanates the duty of rendering Him the tribute of our homages, and our thanks.

Worship, the sign of the relation between God and man, should be interior and exterior. That prescribed by Christianity is pure and holy: for it is founded on charity, gratitude, docility of heart and mind, the practice of modesty, recollection, and all the virtues.

The necessity of exterior worship is derived from the very nature of man. An intelligent being, he understands that he owes homage to the author of his being, to the common Father of the human family.

This two-fold worship constitutes a worship the most holy, august, and perfect. Reason approves of it because it is worthy of reason, and God accepts it because it is worthy of His acceptance.

In all ages, man has offered to God an exterior worship: every where have altars been raised to His glory, on which sacrifices were offered, and before which prayer was sent up, to the Most High. Man being such, says the Council of Trent, that he cannot, but difficultly, and without sensible signs, raise himself to the meditation of divine things, the Church, like a tender mother, has established certain rites, and ordained, that certain parts of the mass should be said in a low, and others in an audible, voice. She has also instituted ceremonies in conformity with the apostolic discipline and tradition.

Prayer is natural to man: it causes him to forget his troubles, tranquillizes his mind, calms his passions. Among the Romans, it was customary, when sitting down at table, for the master of the house to take a cup of wine, and sprinkle a few drops on the ground. This was a libation in honor of providence. Christians, at all times, have been accustomed to offer prayer before and after meals, to thank God for the repast they had taken, or

ask his blessing on that they were about to take, and this pious custom cannot be too seriously recommended in all families.

In the *Alcibiades* of Plato there is a prayer to the following effect: "Great God! grant what is good, even when we do not ask for it; and refuse what is evil, even though we should request it."

The Lord's prayer is eminently the prayer of the Christian, dictated by our Lord himself, and includes confession, adoration, humility, and supplication.

"Prayer," says MONTESQUIEU, "is a religious duty. All civilized people dwell in houses, whence has naturally sprung the idea of building a house of God, where they might adore Him, and seek Him in their fears or hopes. In fact, nothing is more consoling to men, than to have a place where they find the Divinity more present, and where they may, altogether, tell their weaknesses and their miseries."*

"Prayer," writes DAMIRON, "is the offspring of faith and love, destined to vivify and fortify souls. It is a sigh for eternal life. . . . Prayer is nothing but the aspiration of the soul to the supreme and absolute good: it is in perfect harmony with the general destination of man: for,

* *Espr. des lois*, liv. xxv.

whether it raises him up and sustains him, whether it excites and exalts him, it cannot fail to fortify him and render him better and happier. Prayer, without being precisely virtue, is the beginning of all virtue. To pray, to pray well, is the preparation for living well."

"In the conviction of his misery," observes COUSIN, "man conceives obscurely and vaguely the all-perfect being, and cannot conceive Him without feeling himself comforted and relieved, without experiencing the desire to possess still more, were it only for a passing moment, the power and sweetness of this consolation. The poor woman, whose prayer Fenelon envied, did not pronounce learned words: she wept in silence, lost in the thought of the all-perfect and infinite Being, the unseen witness, and secret consoler, of all her misery. We all resemble that poor woman."

"When you have prayed," remarks LAMENNAIS, "do you not feel your heart more light, and your soul more content. Prayer renders affliction less painful, and joy more pure: it mingles with the one I know not what strength and sweetness, and with the other a celestial perfume."

But, it is objected, this exterior rite of religion loses all its efficacy, as the services of the church

are celebrated in a language unknown to the people.

To this objection, I will reply in the words of a learned writer: "It was necessary for the church, in order to preserve *unity* of faith, to employ a fixed and unchangeable language, while all other tongues were variable, and in course of time, have, most of them, become obsolete. See what takes place among Protestants: they have adopted, in their liturgies, the living languages; and the consequence is that they must constantly renew their formularies, and even re-touch the translation of the Bible: hence alterations without end. Had the church done the same, it would have been necessary to convoke general councils every fifty years in order to renew and re-adapt her formularies in the administration of the sacraments.

"Unity of language was necessary to preserve the strictest bond, and the easiest communication of doctrine, among the different churches of the world, and to keep them most faithfully attached to the centre of Catholic unity. Take away the Latin language, and the Italian priest who travels in France, or the French priest who travels in England, could not celebrate the holy mysteries. This is the case with Protestants. Out of their

own country, they cannot participate in public worship. A Catholic is not a foreigner in any country, as far as his worship is concerned. A learned language, understood only by educated men, inspires greater respect than the popular jargon. . . . For the people of Britainny, Picardy, Auvergne, and Gascony, according to the principles of the reformers, have as much right to the Calvinistic liturgy in their jargon, as the Parisians have to it in the purest French. . . . . .

"The Latin language in the west, the Greek in the east, . . . preserve something of the majesty of Rome which becomes the much greater majesty of the Catholic church.

"If religion and reason owe immortal thanks to the Catholic church for having adopted the Greek and Latin languages, the sciences are not the less indebted to her. By immortalizing their tongue, the church has immortalized the literature of the Greeks and Romans, just as the popes have saved, by sanctifying them, the monuments of the Cæsars. Without the cross that crowns it, the pillar of Trajan would, long since, have fallen to the ground." *

In order to render our worship perfect, it is necessary that there should be in the treasures of

* *Gaume, p.* 106.

the church a sacrament, which, by its unity, should take the place of all the ancient sacrifices, and should surpass them, infinitely, by its excellence. *This is my body*, said Christ, at the last supper: and the words were realised. Under the visible appearances of bread, his flesh and blood were concealed. *Do this in commemoration of me*, he added; and the perpetual sacrifice of the altar, bloodless, but yet real, was instituted. St. Paul received this doctrine from Christ himself, after His ascension into heaven, and delivered it to the faithful, with this solemn caution: *He who eateth or drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.* *

"The man," says CHATEAUBRIAND, "who would approach worthily, once a month, the sacrament of the Eucharist, would be, necessarily, the most virtuous man on earth. Transfer the reasoning from the individual to the collective, from a man to the people, and you will see that communion is an entire legislation."

"Look at those men," writes VOLTAIRE, "who receive God into their bosoms, in the midst of august ceremonies, with the glimmering of tapers, and music that enchants the senses, at the foot of

* *Catech. de persever.*

an altar glittering with gold. The imagination is subdued: the soul is ravished; it scarcely breathes; it is detached from all terrestial things; it is united to God, who is in our flesh and in our blood. After this, who would dare, who could consent to commit a single fault, or harbor the thought of so doing? It is impossible, certainly, to imagine a mystery that could more effectually preserve men in virtue."*

CHATEAUBRIAND directs our attention to four things in the sacrament of the Eucharist:

1st. In the *material* bread and wine, we see the consecration of the nourishment of men, which comes from God, and is derived from his munificence. Were there nothing more in communion than this offering of the richness of the earth to Him who bestows it, that alone would be enough to entitle it to be compared with the finest religious ceremonies of Greece.

2d. The Eucharist is a memorial of the pasch of the Israelites which dates from the days of the Pharaohs. It announces the abolition of bloody sacrifices; and is, moreover, the type of the vocation of Abraham, and of the first alliance of God with men. Every thing grand in antiquity, in history, in legislation, in sacred figures, is to

* *Encyclop. To. iv.* Ed. de Genêve.

be found united in the communion of the Christian.

3d. The Eucharist announces the union of all men in one great family, puts an end to enmities, teaches natural equality and the establishment of a new law which will make no distinction amongst Gentiles and Jews, and will invite all the children of Adam to the same table.

4th. In fine, the fourth thing which we discover in the Eucharist, is the direct mystery, and the real presence of God in the consecrated bread. It is necessary here for the soul to penetrate, for a moment, into that intellectual world which was opened to it before its fall.

"After the Almighty had created man to his image, and breathed into him the breath of life, He made an alliance with him. Adam and God communed together in solitude. That alliance was, of right, broken by Adam's disobedience. The Eternal Being could, no longer, communicate with death, spirituality with matter. Now, between two things of different properties, there can be no point of contact except through a medium. The first effort made by Divine Love to approach us, was by the vocation of Abraham, and the establishment of sacrifices, figures that announced to the world the coming of the Mes-

siah. The Saviour, in restoring us to our ends, . . . reinstated us in our privileges; of which the most precious was to hold communion with our Creator. But this communion could not be in an immediate way, as in the terrestial Paradise: first, because our origin continued sullied; secondly, because our body, now subject to the tomb, has become too feeble to communicate directly with God. An intermediate agency was therefore necessary. The Son of God has furnished it. He has given Himself to man in the Eucharist. . . . . .

"But if the Son of God had remained in his primitive essence, it is evident, that the same separation would have existed here below between God and man: because He could not have effected a union between purity and crime, between an eternal result and the dream of our life. The Word, then, by entering into the woman's womb, has deigned to become like ourselves. On one side He is united with His father by His spirituality, and on the other, with the flesh by His human nature. He thus becomes the desired medium between the guilty child and the merciful parent. In concealing Himself under bread, He is to the eye of the body a sensible object, whilst, to the eye of the soul, He remains an in-

tellectual object. If He has chosen bread as a veil, it is because wheat is a pure and noble emblem of divine nourishment.

"If this high and mysterious theology of which we content ourselves with tracing but a few features, frighten our readers, they should not fail to remark, at least, how luminous are these metaphysics, compared with those of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus. They contain none of those abstractions of ideas, for which it is necessary to create a language unintelligible to the common mass of men."*

* *Génie du Christ.* chap. 7.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FASTING—ABSTINENCE—VENERATION OF SAINTS—THE SUNDAY.

We often hear the objection repeated against fasting and abstinence, that what enters into the mouth of man does not defile him. This is materially true: and no enlightened Christian ever imagined that, of itself, any food has such a relation with the soul, as to have the effect to soil its purity. But he understands that the sin consists in disobeying the command of God, made known through His church; as our first parents incurred guilt from their disobedience to Him, in not abstaining from the fatal apple in Paradise.

On fast-days the sacred canons declare that the faithful shall perform alms-deeds. Fasting, without prayer and alms, is of little value. And St. Leo asks: "What is there more useful or more efficacious than fasting, to disarm the enemy of salvation, to overcome the passions, and resist the seductions of vice? Fasting is the aliment of virtue: it inspires good thoughts and holy desires: it silences the carnal appetites, and renews the spiritual man. But as the vigor of

the soul is not maintained by fasting alone, our abstinence, to be agreeable to God, should be accompanied by works of charity."*

"There still exists in France a custom," writes GAUME, "which proves with what fidelity our fathers submitted to the rigors of penance and fasting during lent. Who would believe it?—this is the custom of exhibiting in the streets the *fat bull.* Formerly everybody religiously observed abstinence, and lent. One only butcher was permitted to sell meat for the use of the sick. That privilege was conceded to him who, in the judgment of men versed in such matters, could produce the fattest ox, which, after the decision was made, the fortunate butcher paraded, richly decorated and crowned with fillets, through the streets of the city."†

In my remarks on exterior worship, I have, thus far, confined myself to that which is due to God alone, and which is styled *latria.* There are two other inferior kinds of worship, viz: that of *dulia*, and of *hyperdulia:* the former paid to the saints in heaven, the latter to the ever-blessed mother of the Redeemer—the Virgin Mary.

The church has been censured by her opponents for the respect she pays the saints: by some

* *Serm. ii, de Jejun.* † *See Cath. pers.* 8, *p.* 99.

it is styled *superstition*, by others *idolatry*. But in spite of their temerity in charging the spouse of Christ with such crimes, their very reason, if they but reflect, will condemn their prejudices. For, have not the homages of the world been given, in every age, to the virtues and merits of eminent men? And why refuse them to those who, by their union with God in the realms of immortality, are the most eminent and the most glorious? We accordingly venerate their names, and invoke their intercession, but do not pray to them as having, of themselves, any inherent power to assist us: we dedicate chapels and altars under their patronage, but not *to* them—God alone being the object of our adoration, Christ alone the supreme mediator between us and His eternal Father. Whenever the word *adore* is used in the liturgy as apparently referring to a creature, it either is used in a wide or poetical signification, or it is applied to the Divinity alone. Thus, on Good-Friday, when the church calls upon the faithful to *adore* the cross, she unquestionably means that they should adore Him who died on the cross, and, in consequence of that wood being consecrated by his death, that they should, likewise, pay it reverence.

It is urged by Protestants and philosophers as an argument against the church, that her ceremonies are borrowed from the Pagans. This is, indeed, a very weak objection. It is certain that all nations have had religious ceremonies. Amid the mass of superstitious practices, there lingered, as well in their belief as in their moral, some sparks of the primitive revelation. What was the conduct of the church? As the depository of all truths, she winnowed the good from the evil, the true from the false. And in reply to her opponents and pretended rivals, she says: "I am long before you: I mount up to the first ages of the world: I have received the truth as a deposite—all the true, the good, the praiseworthy that you possess, are mine." Moreover she has purified, sanctified those usages, as she has purified and consecrated the temples of idolatry, and converted them into churches to the glory of their true master. This, in substance, is the answer of St. Augustine to Faustus, the Manichean.*

Bergier has wisely remarked, that the use of ceremonies in the worship of the true God, has not been borrowed by Christians, but restored by Pagans. True religion is more ancient than false, and has a right to vindicate again the rites which

* *Contr. Faust.* lib. 20, cap. iv, xxi.

her rivals had profaned. Must we abstain from prayer because prayer was offered to Jove? Must we be forbidden to kneel, because the votaries of Diana knelt before her shrine? The inconsistency and imbecility of this argument, or rather sophistry, must be apparent to every candid reader: for, were it carried out to its full extent, it would destroy, as superstitious, all external worship.

Closely connected with this subject is the observance of the *Sunday:* "than which," remarks RAYNAL, "were it merely a civil, and not a religious, institution, nothing could be more admirable." And, with his sweet unction, FENELON exclaims: "With what holy impatience, during the entire week, was the Sunday looked for, when the brethren, in a sacred repose, exchanged the kiss of peace, and formed together but one heart and one soul. . . . They sighed after the joy of those holy assemblies, after the hymns of praise to God, after the sacred festival of the Lamb."*

"Impiety has shewn itself cruelly absurd," writes CHATEAUBRIAND, "when, abolishing the Sunday, it wished to calculate the strength of laborers as that of beasts of burden. How ro-

* *Discours pour le jour de l'Epiph.*

bust soever he may be, man stands in need of repose. This all nations have felt, and all have appointed days to satisfy that necessity. The seventh is the most suitable.

"It is now proved by experience, that the fifth is too early, and the tenth too remote, for repose. The *terror* which could effect everything in France, could never force the peasant to observe the *decade*, because there is a want of strength in men, as there is, likewise, in beasts. The ox cannot labor more than nine days at a time: at the end of the sixth, his lowings seem to demand the hour marked by the general repose of nature. The peasants say: Our oxen know the Sunday, and refuse to work on that day."*

That this day was devoutly observed by the primitive Christians all history abounds with innumerable testimonies. We learn especially from St. Justin, "that on the day of the sun, as the pagans called the Lord's day, all who lived in the city or in the country, were accustomed to assemble in the same place. . . . We assemble, then," he adds, "because it was on that day that God began the creation of the world, and that Jesus Christ, our Saviour, arose and appeared to his

* *Génie du Christ.* 4 partie.

Apostles, and taught them what we have placed before your eyes."*

On that sacred day, the faithful assisted at the sacrifices of the altar, and partook of the holy Eucharist, which, from the earliest ages, was, in some parts, administered under the form of bread only, while the priests always received under both kinds. Whether communion be given to the laity under one species, or both, is a point of ecclesiastical discipline which is discretionary with the Church, and which, in effect, has varied at different times, and under different circumstances.†

* *Apolog.* † *Conc. Const. Sess.* xiii.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONFESSION — PRAYER — COMMUNION.

CONFESSION cannot be a human institution. It is too repugnant to the inclination of human nature, to have been palmed upon the credulities or superstitions of men. The whole world would have reclaimed against the reformer who presumed to bind down the consciences of the people to a tribunal of his own invention: and the faithful page of history would have stigmatized his effort. The fact of its always having been identified with the Church, been practised by the wisest and best of Christians, been perpetuated to our own times, proves, incontestably, its origin, its sanctity, its divinity. Even VOLTAIRE has acknowledged that "there is no establishment more wise."* And again: "Confession is an excellent thing ... it is very good to induce hearts ulcerated with hatred to forgive, and to cause the robbers of their neighbor's goods to make restitution."†

* *Remarques sur la Tragedie d'Olympie.*

† *Dic. Philos.* Art. Catech. du Curé.

The same author adds: "The enemies of the Roman Church, who have risen against so salutary an institution, appear to have taken from men the strongest curb to their crimes. . . . Thus, the Christian religion has consecrated things of which God had permitted human reason to descry the utility, and embrace the shadow."*

MARMONTEL has expressed his sentiments on this subject in these words: "What a preservative of the morals of youth is the obligation of confessing every month!" And LEIBNITZ: "We cannot deny that this institution is the work of the wisdom of God. There is nothing in Christianity more worthy of eulogy. I look upon a grave, pious, and prudent confessor, as a great instrument of God for the salvation of souls. And if one can hardly find a faithful friend on earth, what is it to find one who is obliged by the sacredness of a divine oath to observe fidelity and assist souls. The confessor confers peace, honor, light, and moral liberty." VOLTAIRE agrees with him, that "Confession is a divine institution, which has its origin in the infinite mercy of its author. . . . The obligation of repentance dates from the period when man lost his innocence. Repentance only can take the place of

* *Annal. de L'Empire, l.* i.

innocence. To give evidence of repentance, sins must be acknowledged. . . . Confession was practised in the mysteries of Orpheus, of Isis, of Ceres of Samothracia. History informs us that Marcus Aurelius, when initiating himself in the mysteries of Ceres Eleusina, was obliged to confess to the Hierophant."

We must not, however, imagine that it was in imitation of the pagan rites that Christ instituted confession. The traces of this duty, preserved in paganism, were the remains of a primitive revelation, since we find it among all nations. Confession is a law of fallen, guilty human nature. Christ renewed it, sanctified it, and raised it to the dignity of a sacrament. RAYNAL remarks that "the Jesuits established in Paraguay a theocratic government, but with an advantage peculiar to the religion that formed its basis—the practice of confession. It alone holds the place of all penal laws, and watches over the purity of manners. In Paraguay, religion, more powerful than the force of arms, conducts the guilty one to the feet of the magistrate. There, far from palliating his crimes, repentance makes him exaggerate them; instead of eluding the punishment, he goes to demand it, upon his knees. The more severe and public it is, the more calm it imparts to the

criminal. Chastisement which, under other circumstances, terrifies the guilty, is, under these, their consolation, because it hushes remorse by expiation. The people of Paraguay have no civil laws, because they have no property; no criminal laws, because each one accuses himself voluntarily. All their laws are the precepts of religion. The best of all governments would be a theocracy on which the tribunal of confession is established."*

ROBESPIERRE ordained: "that festivals should be instituted to awaken in man the thought of the dignity and divinity of his nature."†

"Prayer," says ST. MARTIN, "is the respiration of the soul." And DUFRESNE: "God has placed prayer and religious resignation between misfortune and the soul, to annihilate our sorrows, and save us from despair."

ROUSSEAU makes the Vicar of Savoy hold the following language: "Formerly I said mass with the levity which we are apt to indulge in the gravest things that are often repeated. Since the adoption of my new principles, I celebrate it with more veneration, I feel myself penetrated with the majesty of the Supreme Being, with his presence, with the insufficiency of the human mind

* *Hist. polit. des Indes.* † *Decret.* 18, *floreal an* 2, 1792.

which conceives so imperfectly its relation with its author. Remembering that I offer Him the vows of the people under a prescribed form, I follow with care, all the ceremonies, I recite attentively, I am exact in not omitting a single word or ceremony. When I reach the moment of the consecration, I collect myself in order to do it with all the dispositions which the Church and the grandeur of the Sacrament demand. I endeavor to annihilate my reason before the Supreme intelligence. I say to myself: who art thou to measure infinite power? I pronounce, with respect, the sacramental words, and I give to their effect all the faith that depends on me. Inconceivable as is this mystery, I have no fear that on the day of judgment I shall be punished for profaning it."*

And VOLTAIRE breaks out into the following impassioned apostrophe: "My companions, my brethren, men who possess intelligence, adore, with me, the God who endowed you with it. Religion consists in submission to God, and the practice of virtue. . . . It would be passing strange if all nature, all the stars obeyed the eternal laws, and that a little animal five feet high should contemn those laws, and act as he pleases, led on

* *Emile, prof. de foi du Vic. Sav.*

only by his caprices. . . . Let us be inflexible servants of God. . . . .

> Man is an atom vile, a point in space;
> Yet from his everlasting dwelling-place
> God deigns to look upon our nothing here:
> Him only, and not mortals, should we fear.

The adoration of the Being of beings is our first duty: not the only one, but the others are subordinate to it. . . . There is no civilized nation that does not adore God by public acts of religion."

"One day," writes BERNARDIN DE S. PIERRE, "Jean Jacques Rousseau and myself finding ourselves, after a walk on Mount Valerian, to have reached the top of the mountain, formed the plan of requesting the hermits who dwell there, to give us dinner. We arrived at their monastery a short time before they sat down to table, and while they were engaged in the chapel. Rousseau proposed that we should enter, and offer up a prayer. The hermits were reciting the litany of Providence, which is very beautiful. After finishing our prayer, and the hermits were on their way to the refectory, Rousseau exclaimed with emotion: I now experience what is said in the Gospel: *Where two or three are assembled in my name, I am in the midst of them!* There is

here a sentiment of peace and happiness that penetrates the soul."*

Lord Fitzwilliam, in his letter to *Atticus*, concludes his subject by laying down these three propositions: "First, virtue, justice, and morality being the basis of all government, *it is impossible to establish that basis without the tribunal of penance.*

"Secondly: *It is impossible to establish the tribunal of penance, without the belief in the real presence, the fundamental ground of the Roman Catholic faith.*

"Thirdly: *It is impossible to form a system of government which could be permanent or advantageous unless it rests upon the Roman Catholic religion.*" A most extraordinary admission, certainly, from a Protestant writer.

The secret of confession is of so inviolable a character, that the priest would rather die, than reveal it, or take any advantage of what he has learned only through the tribunal of penance. Because the reputation of the penitent is dearer to him than life itself. In this very city, the question was tried some thirty years ago, the Rev. Dr. Kohlmann being the accused, and the excellent Mr. Samson his counsellor. It was

* *Etudes*, liv. 3.

decided that the secret of confession was not, even by the laws of the country, required to be revealed. How much more just and liberal was this decision, in our own enlightened and glorious republic, than that issued in England two hundred years ago, against Father Garnet, because he would not break the inviolable seal of confession!

St. Gregory says, that the priest should be careful never to make known, by words, or signs, or in any other way, the sins of the penitent. "We ordain," he added, "that any priest, who should dare to disclose the sins of his penitent, be deposed, immured in a monastery, and condemned to do penance during the remainder of his days."

All priests, we know, have not been immaculate. Yet, in consulting the history of past ages, we can discover very few instances in which the secrecy of the confessional has been violated. Nor can the confessor enquire of their penitents the names or residence of their accomplices: they are bound even to warn them not to discover in confession the names of those who have participated in their crimes.

It has been objected that confession may be dangerous to the State. That the priests can make use of their influence, in that tribunal, to

intimidate the weak, and cause them to take any part, no matter how fatal, against the government. How often have we not heard the calumny repeated in our own republic, that the confessor converts the tribunal of penance into a political lever?—Alas! how little acquainted are they who make this accusation, with the genuine spirit and nature of the sacrament of penance! Politics and human affairs are not introduced into that sanctuary of faith and religion. The transactions there are of a spiritual, superhuman character. This world—except as far as man's duties in life are concerned—is set aside, and a spiritual world is laid open, in that tribunal, of which, no where else, can be descried so clear and bright a view.

There is another objection against confession, which is of so delicate a nature, that I prefer not to dwell upon it. I will merely remark, that the character of a priest is too sacred, his reputation too precious, his ministry too useful, to be blasted and ruined by the caprice, or perhaps, malice of an individual. An accusation against the minister of penance should not be easily admitted. The wise remark of St. Thomas should never be lost sight of: "Many are deterred from vice through fear of infamy: many, when they find themselves

defamed, throw off all restraint and rush into crime."* The world is prone to propagate scandal against the ministers of religion. St. Augustine observed, fifteen hundred years ago, that "if any accusation, true or false, is made against one who professes piety, it is spread, insisted on, exaggerated, and repeated, until it is believed by all who hear of it."†

The word of the priest should, certainly, be taken, before the accusation of the laic. His reputation is too dear, too sacred, to be sacrificed to the arts, the malice, or the jealousy of a slanderer. But where there is *evidence* against the priest, who has attempted to change the sacred tribunal of penance into a place of criminal solicitation, the laws of the church, the vigilance of bishops, and the insulted virtue of the penitent, will prove to the world how inexorable is the arm of justice in avenging the sanctity of the confessional.

* *Sec.* 2, 33. *Art. vii.* † *Ep.* 78.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

The Catholic Church is composed of all true believers scattered throughout the universe but bound to the centre of unity established by its Divine Founder—the chair of Peter, at Rome. They adhere, in all sincerity, to the evangelical teachings, they profess the same faith, and the same morality, are animated by the same hope, governed by the same law, and sanctified by the same sacraments. During eighteen hundred years, all nations have acknowledged the existence of God, the fall of man, the advent of the Redeemer, and the divinity of his religion. During that period, a succession of lawful pastors has been uninterrupted;—successors of the Apostles—charged by their ministry, to watch over the two-fold deposite of Scripture and tradition, and the instruction of the people in the faith and morality of the Gospel.

The essential difference between the true Church and all sects is, that, amid the changes and revolutions—moral, physical, and social—

that have occurred from the era of her establishment, she has ever taught the same unvaried, and unadulterated doctrines: while sectarian characteristics are variability and disunion. The successors of Arius, Mahomet, Luther, Calvin, and others, have wandered into such strange and inexplicable divergencies of belief, that were the authors of the various sects to appear on earth, it would be impossible for them to find their way back, through the numberless mazes of the theological labyrinth, to their own original and primitive teachings.

Christ spoke to his Apostles: "Go, teach all nations."

Mahomet, six hundred years after, commanded his disciples: "Go, subjugate all nations."

In one leader, we contemplate divine power, the energy and efficacy of the Eternal Word. In the other, human force, and the unsparing power of the cimeter. Well has VOLTAIRE sung:

> "The Koran's sword, grasped in his bloody hands,
> Enforces, with dread silence, his commands.
> Of lies and hardihood, a medley wild,
> With civil discord, and base crime defiled:
> And he, thy prophet, gracious God! is styled.
>
> * * * * * * *

His grim religion, in imposture born,
Of every future age shall be the scorn;
The triumph he effected, for a time,
Was founded upon error, upon crime."*

The Church may be said to date her establishment from the moment when Christ addressed these memorable words to his Apostles: "I have chosen you, that you may go, bring forth fruit, and your fruit shall remain. . . . Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

The Jews and Gentiles were the first children of the Church. St. Peter converted, by his first sermon, not less than five thousand of them. That prince of the Apostles afterwards laid the foundation of the ecclesiastical power in Rome. From his day, the admirable chair of succession has never been interrupted. "There is a pleasure," says PASCAL, "in being in a ship lashed by the tempest, when there is a certainty of safety. The persecutions which harass the Church are of this nature."

The supremacy was conferred on Peter by Jesus Christ in these terms: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

* *Mahom.* Trag.

And He adds: "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

By the *gates of hell* are designated the infernal powers, scandals, schisms, heresies. By *the keys* authoritative administration; by the power of *binding and loosing*, the magistratic character. The Church has three symbols: the first of the Apostles, consisting of twelve articles. The second of the Council of Nice, held in 325, and confirmed by that of Constantinople, six years later, which is recited at the Mass. The third, called the *Athanasian*, not because written by St. Athanasius, but because it vindicates the doctrine which he defended against the Arians.

In the symbol of the Apostles we discover four distinctive characters of the true Church. The first, *unity*. One in faith, in the same sacraments, and the same lawful pastors. VOLTAIRE addresses all who have separated from her fold, in these words: "And who are you, then, preachers in sheep-skins? Has Jesus Christ sent you, to the exclusion of all other Christians? Shew us what succession of priests, ordained by the Apostles, has transmitted the Holy Ghost to you, from Jerusalem to Neufchatel. From whom do

you descend? from a wool-carder, Jean Leclerc, burned at Metz: from Jean Chauvin, (Calvin,) who doffing the butcher's apron, threw Michel Servet into the flames, so often kindled for himself: of Viret, a printer of Rouen; of Farel, of Beza, of Crepin, who were not priests, had never been ordained by any one. They could not, therefore, give the Holy Ghost, whom they did not possess,—and you are but bastards."

"Though spread through the whole world, the Church," writes St. Irenæus, "preserves the apostolic faith with extreme zeal, as if it inhabited one only house. She believes it as having but one spirit and one heart: and by an admirable consent, she professes and teaches the same faith, as having but one mouth. For though the languages of the world are different, the faith is everywhere the same. The Churches of Germany, of Gaul, of the East, of Egypt, do not think or teach differently."*

The Church is holy. Her Head, the author and finisher of our faith, is the principle of holiness. His Apostles, inspired by the Holy Ghost, and commissioned by Christ, were holy. The doctrines and morals which they taught are holy. The primitive Christians, and martyrs who shed

* *Adv. hier.* l. 1.

their blood in testimony of their faith, were holy.

That she is Catholic, the whole world testifies, all ages bear witness. Europe is crowded with her children, from one sea to the other; and all nations are the heritage of her divine Founder. His reign is unbounded. Under the banners of His cross the islands exult, and the continents are glad. From the dawn of the aurora to the far off regions of the setting sun, the name of the Lord is great among the nations, and to Him, in every place, the clean and perpetual sacrifice is offered.

"As there is but one episcopacy," writes St. Cyprian, "so there is but one Church spread through a vast multitude of members that compose it. As we see emanating from the sun numberless rays, while there is but one centre of light; from the trunk of a tree are many branches while there is but one trunk strongly cleaving with its roots to the earth; from one source divers streams of water gush, which meander back to the same origin; such is the image of the Church. The divine light which penetrates it, embraces in its rays the entire world, but they emanate from one and the same point which distributes its lustre in all places: her inexhaustible fecundity propagates her branches through all the

earth. She pours forth to distant climes her abundant waters: yet, everywhere the same principle, everywhere the same origin, everywhere manifesting her strength by the number of her children."*

From the fact of her having been founded on the Apostles, (the corner-stone being Christ,) the Church is apostolic. She has ever professed, and to the end of time shall profess, the doctrine of the Apostles.

She is styled *Roman*, because the See of the successors of Peter, is at Rome. His Chair, we know, was first established at Antioch, then the capital of the East; but afterwards transferred to Rome, the metropolis of the West. All Christian antiquity has recognised the foundation of these two Churches by St. Peter; that he governed both successively; and that he received the crown of martyrdom, at Rome, in the reign of Nero. All this is incontestable.

It is called the Chair, *(Cathedra,)* not the throne of Peter, because he and his successors were to be the humble imitators of Christ. The first among the brethren, they were to be, in some sense, the last. For this reason the popes have assumed the appellation of the servants of the servants of God.

* *De Unit. Eccles.*

The Church has not been injured or materially affected by the conspiracies, violence, or defections of men and nations. She is secured against all dangers by the infallible promise of her Founder. With the Testament of Christ in one hand and the history of nations in the other, she sees, with ever-increasing admiration, the events and facts of history ranging themselves under the prophecies which appertain to her, as under the indefectible empire which governs them. Two hundred and fifty-seven Pontiffs have filled the Apostolic Chair, from Peter down to the glory and ornament of our age—Pius IX. "The Church," in the language of LAHURE, "knows the past, and judges of the future. She is acquainted with the arts of human speech, unveils the bad faith of sophistry, forsees times and prodigies before they arrive, and she will continue on earth a perpetual struggle, until she is crowned in heaven, with the everlasting garland of victory."

Infallibility in all that relates to faith and morals has been promised by Christ, to the body of Pastors: this prerogative rests not on their wisdom or learning, or virtues; it is supernatural, and the result of the continued assistance of the Holy Spirit: "I am with you all days to the con-

summation of the world." Here is the divine and solemn pledge of the Eternal Word Himself.

"The Catholic priests," writes the judicious DROZ, "are accused of intolerance: but that accusation would cease, if the public were better acquainted with the principles of the Church, and the motives which actuate the clergy under certain circumstances."

This hue and cry against the influence and intolerance of the clergy is very often raised by men, as a pretext for their own religious indifference, and want of faith. Priests and bishops are human beings; and far from being impeccable. Most of them are faithful to their sacred vocation: some there may be whose lives are not in accordance with the sanctity of their character. But let the eloquent Chateaubriand speak on this subject: "If formerly the Church was poor from the last grade up to the first, it was because Christianity was indigent, like herself. But the clergy were not expected to be in poverty when opulence surrounded her. They would, in that case, have lost all consideration in society, and certain classes would have been out of the reach of their moral influence.

"The Head of the Church was a prince, to speak to princes. The bishops ranking with the

great, dared instruct them in their duties. The priests, above the necessities of life, mingled with the rich, whose morals they chastened; and the simple *curé* associated with the poor, whom he assisted with his charity, and consoled by his example.

"The simplicity of heart, holiness of life, evangelical poverty, and charity of Jesus Christ, have formed one of the most respectable orders of the nation. Which of us, proud philosophers, would be willing, during the rigors of the winter, to be roused up at midnight, in order to administer the last sacraments to some peasant dying on straw in the distant country. Which of us would be willing to have his heart broken with the spectacle of misery he cannot relieve, to be surrounded with a family whose hollow jaws and sunken eyes speak the starvation under which they are languishing. Would be satisfied to follow the curates of Paris!—those angels of humanity—into the habitations of crime, and sorrow, there to console vice, under the most disgusting shapes, and to breathe hope into the despairing heart? Which of us, in fine, would wish to separate himself from the world of the happy, to live incessantly, in the midst of suffering, and at death, to receive no reward, for all

these deeds of charity and zeal, but the ingratitude of the poor, and the calumny of the rich?"

The authority of the Church is divine, because she transmits the divine word of which she is the depository, and because she has a divine mission to transmit it: and if we add to that inherent authority, the free adhesion to it, the deference and respect of all men who have believed in God, and in the Messiah, we will have a very imposing human authority in favor of her doctrines, and morality. We must believe, then, that the Church founded by Christ, organized by his Apostles, illustrated by his martyrs, defended by the greatest geniuses, signalized by the devotion to it of so many holy personages, is truly the school of the children of God upon earth, or their guide towards a more noble state, towards a life more pure. That Church is the work of the Eternal, and like Him, everlasting. VOLTAIRE has said:

> "The works of men are fragile as themselves:
> God dissipates, at will, their proud designs;
> He always stable is, and He alone;
> In vain their malice would attempt to sap
> The structure of the Holy City: He
> Its blest foundations ever will sustain—
> Triumphant over hell and over time."

"There is nothing more sublime," says BOSSUET, "nor more divine, in the person of Jesus

Christ, than his having predicted, on one side, that His Church should never cease to be attacked, either by the persecutions of the world, or by the schisms and heresies that should constantly spring up, or by the relaxation of discipline and morals: and on the other, that in spite of all these contradictions, that Church should always flourish, should always have pastors, who would hand down from one to another the authority of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, sound doctrine, and the holy Sacraments..... This is what he promised to the work of the twelve fishermen."*

"I am a Christian," says DIDEROT, "because it is reasonable to be one. I was born in the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church, and with all my strength, I submit to her decisions."†

"I am a Christian and a Catholic," Voltaire solemnly declared. And he adds: "If ever one page was printed under my name that could scandalize the sacristan of a parish, I am ready to tear it to pieces. I wish to live and die tranquilly in the bosom of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, without attacking any one, without offending any one. I detest anything that might give the least trouble to society."‡

* *Instr. past.* † *Pers. Philosph.*

‡ *Lettre au Pére de la Tour, 7 Fev.* 1746.

"There are, certainly, in the Church, as in the world, good and bad, vices and virtues," writes MARMONTEL. "This must be acknowledged. It is also true, that the good is so little, and the bad so extensive, that the latter seems to stifle the former. But if there was as strong an inclination for good as there is for evil, if good examples were as much lauded as bad, could there be any doubt that the balance would be in its favor? Praise speaks in so low a voice, and censure in so loud, that the latter only is heard. Esteem and friendship are commonly moderate in their eulogies: they imitate the modesty of well-bred men in their approval, whereas resentment and prejudice exaggerate to excess. Thus, the good is seen only through a medium that diminishes it, and evil through one that magnifies."

"If among such a multitude of bishops," says VOLTAIRE, "some have led a life unworthy of their state, it is certain, that there are, among the clergy, truly upright souls; wise and charitable bishops and curés. The body of the bishops of France is composed of men of quality, who think and act with a nobility worthy their birth; they are charitable and generous."*

* *Essai sur les Mœurs.*

And ROUSSEAU: "If the Catholics, without wasting their time in combatting the arguments alleged by their adversaries, were to confine themselves to dispute their right to preach and teach, they would embarrass them much. See, would they say, how unjust you are; you agree that miracles are necessary to authorize a divine mission, and yet you, private individuals, come and speak to us as the ambassadors of God! What title have you to submit our common judgment to your particular opinion. You dogmatize, preach, censure, anathematize, excommunicate, punish, put to death, exercise the authority of prophets, and, nevertheless, only present yourselves as individuals. Either cease to speak and act as apostles, or else show us your titles. To this what have our reformers to reply? For myself, I see not. I am of opinion that they must either hold their tongues, or perform miracles."*

With this remarkable declaration of Rousseau, VOLTAIRE agrees in the following passage: "The Church could not have been established without a miracle.... Religion has subsisted, as all acknowledge, four thousand years: the sects are of yesterday. I am forced to believe and admire. ... Men cannot destroy what God has made....

* *Lettre de la Mont.*

Religion is the Colossus which a hundred strokes of the battering-ram cannot shake: do you think that a pebble can level it with the ground?"

And again he sings:

"When Calvinism first appeared in France,
I saw it weak, and, with slow steps advance:
Base in its origin, and wrapt in shade,
Within four walls confined, and without aid;
I saw it, through a hundred ways, at first,
Obscurely creeping: till, at length, it burst—
A frightful phantom—on my startled eye,
Then reared its proud and hideous head on high,
Seized on a throne, on prostrate mortals trod,
And overturned the altars of our God.
Far from the court, beneath this grot obscure,
The wrongs of my religion I deplore:
One hope consoles my days declining fast;
This upstart worship cannot always last:
From men's caprices it has drawn its birth—
And as it came, so shall it leave the earth."

We confound those who have strayed from the path of truth, by showing them the doctrine which was given by the Apostles to the Church of Rome. Thus did St. Irenæus write sixteen hundred years ago: "The Church of Rome," he adds, "is the greatest, and the best known in all the world; it was founded by the glorious Apostles Peter and Paul .... and the faith which they announced, has come down to us by the suc-

cession of bishops..... We must take lessons from the place where the Lord hath placed his gifts; and they who possess the gifts of the Lord, are the successors of the Apostles, and these successors preserve the unalterable language of truth, the certain intelligence of the Scriptures."

"Let heretics," says TERTULLIAN, "show us the origin of their churches, let them designate the catalogue of their bishops; and make us see their order and succession, from the beginning: so that the first of their bishops may have some one of the Apostles, or of the Apostolic men who lived with them for their founders and predecessors: for, it is in this manner, that the Church of Rome traces the origin of her bishops to St. Peter, who ordained Levi to succeed him."*

And St. Augustine: "Donatists, count, if you can, your bishops from the See of St. Peter, and let us see how they have succeeded one another: for this is the *rock* which the haughty gates of hell cannot overturn. Many considerations keep me in the Church: the consent of people and nations, authority commenced by miracles, nourished by hope, augmented by charity, fortified by antiquity. I am kept in it, by the continual succession of bishops, from that Apostle to whom Christ con-

* *De præscript*, Cap. iii.

fided the government of his sheep; I am kept in it, by the name CATHOLIC, which has belonged so properly to this Church to the exclusion of all heretical sects, that, although all heretics wish to pass as Catholics, yet when a stranger enquires for the assembly of *Catholics*, none of these heretics will presume to point out his temple."

Again: "After all the proofs that we have adduced in support of the Catholic religion, we should not hesitate to throw ourselves into the bosom of that Church, which, by a continued succession of bishops, since the Chair of St. Peter was established, has always preserved, down to the present time, the authority which she received from Jesus Christ."*

ST. CYPRIAN expresses himself with equal force and clearness: "After his resurrection, the Saviour said to Peter: *Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.* On him He built His Church, and consigned to him the government of the flock. And although He confers on all the Apostles an equal power to forgive sins, when He said: *receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive*, &c., nevertheless, to make unity clear, He erected *one Chair*, and established, by His power, that unity, in the *unity of one Head.* In vain

* *De Unit. Eccl.*

would one believe himself faithful, if he did not cleave to this unity. Cut off the branch from the tree, and that branch cannot produce any more fruit; cut off the stream from its source, and it will soon cease to flow. He who resists the Church, and abandons the Chair of St. Peter, on which the Church is founded, must not believe that he is in the Church, the unity of which St. Paul characterised when he said: *there is but one body and one soul.* . . . This Church is the mother of the faithful: she gives us birth in Jesus Christ, nourishes us with her doctrine, and makes us live by her Spirit."*

"The Church by her missions," writes BUFFON, "has done more to subjugate barbarous nations than the victorious armies of princes. Paraguay was conquered in this manner: the mildness, good example, charity, and the exercise of virtue constantly practised by the missionaries, touched the savages and overcame their ferocity. They came, of their own accord, to ask for the law which rendered men so perfect; they submitted to that law, and lived together in society. Nothing reflects more honor on religion than her having civilized those nations, and laid the foundations of

* *De Unit. Eccles.*

an empire, without any other arms than those of virtue."*

How different this Church from the religion of Protestantism! She always the same, true, and indestructible, as her name *Catholic and Apostolic* designates and proves. Hear the candid avowal made by a learned Protestant professor: "The Protestant religion is entirely dissolved by the multiplicity of Confessions of Faith and sects that have been formed since the reformation..... Not only the external polity of our Church has undergone innumerable subdivisions, but it is disunited, and divided interiorly in its essentials and opinions."†

"The Reformation," another Protestant professor acknowledged in 1835, "in its separated Churches, and spiritual power, resembles a worm cut into extremely small portions, all of which continue to move along as they retain the power of motion, but which gradually lose that power and die away."‡

RHEINARD had before remarked, that "If Luther were to rise from the grave, it would be impossible for him to recognise his own, or even as members of the society he has founded, those

* *Hist. Nat.* Tom. vi, ed. in 12mo.

† *Wette*, les Protestants, 1828. ‡ *Eglises Chretiennes.*

Apostles, who, in our Church, are considered his successors."*

Another minister has said, that "Disunion among the pastors gives rise to the greatest confusion in the heads and hearts of the people. They listen, they read, but they no longer know where they are, what they should believe, or what follow."†

"I could write on my thumb-nail," said HARMS, a minister at Kiel, "all the doctrines which are now generally believed by Protestants."

And SCHMALTZ, a Prussian jurisconsult: "In consequence of reforming and protesting, Protestantism has been reduced to the level of a zero, before which there is no cypher."

From these authorities, and from what has been said in this chapter, we may justly conclude, in the language of LAHURE, that "Protestantism is clearly not a religion, but the negation of all religion: it is the principal cause of all the calamities that have overwhelmed Europe; it is, therefore, not truth; for truth, says ROUSSEAU, is never injurious."

* *Discours sur l'Eglise*, 1800. † *Ludke*.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD.

No dignity can be more exalted than that of the priesthood. The duties of the clergy are as holy as they are important, and their lives should be examples of virtue and holiness to the laity. The eyes of the world are fixed upon them, and the truth of a doctrine is, in the present age, as it was in the days of Tertullian who makes the remark, judged of by the morals of those who call themselves its Apostles. A bad priest is a scandal, and a stumbling-block, to men; a good priest is a guide, an example, and a shining beacon.

The Catholic priest derives his light, his wisdom, and his zeal, from the Holy Scriptures, from tradition, and from the Councils and Fathers of the Church. He seeks the glory of God, by making Him known and causing Him to be loved and adored; he contributes to the salvation of men by instructing and edifying them; he is a stranger to fear, prejudices, or despondency; conquers all difficulties, sacrifices his very affec-

tions, overcomes his natural propensities, and places all his confidence in the sanctity of his ministry and the power of his faith.

"Such a priest," in the language of HERMANN JANSENS, "animated by the spirit of divine faith, will silence, by his example, the calumnies, falsehoods, and railleries, of the enemies of the Catholic Church. He will destroy that fatal idea, which, in our unhappy age, has taken possession of so many persons, that the priests preach in one way, and act in another: that they have entered upon the ecclesiastical state only to lead a more easy life. . . . . He will prove by his conduct, that he has enlisted under the banners of the Church of Christ, only to labor for his moral perfection, and that of his brethren; to entice them into the way which leads to eternal felicity, to manifest to men the will of the Supreme Being, to propagate the true faith, to prevent or diminish evil, to present, by his good example, to all who approach him, a living image of Jesus Christ, to co-operate in an effectual manner, in their salvation, by a zealous and judicious administration of holy things. He will be superior to all worldly passions, he will cultivate, with ardor, the talents which God has entrusted to him, and will endeavor to make a beneficial use of them. Profoundly

convinced of the truth of God's promises and of His inexhaustible munificence, he looks to heaven, and not to the earth, for the reward of his labors and sufferings. . . . ."

The celibacy of the clergy is a discipline that has been vehemently objected to by the opponents of the Catholic Church. On this head the sentiments of PORTALIS deserve the particular attention of the reader: "The prohibition of marriage among the Catholic Clergy is connected with many important considerations. Men consecrated to the Divinity should be honored; and, in a religion which requires in them a certain bodily purity, they should carefully abstain from everything that could create a suspicion against it. The Catholic worship demands uninterrupted labor, and continual attention. It has been deemed proper to free her ministers from the embarrassments of a family. In the regulations appertaining to the morals of the priesthood, whatever bears the character of severity is loved and admired: this has been made apparent in modern times, by the little confidence that is manifested towards married priests."

The mission of the Priest among the people, and the duties which he is called to discharge in society, require that he should be surrounded

with respect and consideration. Where there is not respect, there will be familiarity; and familiarity, too often, breeds contempt. In order to inspire respect, the priest must be grave, virtuous, charitable, and devoted to the salvation of souls. But with a family, could he perform the duties of his calling, as faithfully and assiduously, as without one? Would not the solicitude for the things of this world interfere with his spiritual and heavenly vocation? St. Paul has answered this question.

After condemning the celibacy of the clergy, the enemies of the Church scrutinize and rashly judge all the actions of the ministers of the altar: and exult over truth and virtue, if all are not found exempt even from the slightest imperfections. How often must we repeat, that the priest, by entering the sanctuary, does not cease to be a human being? But why rejoice in his foibles, or triumph over his errors—and not take into consideration his usefulness, his devotion, his virtues? Why forget his charity to the poor, his protection of the orphan, his sympathy for the suffering, his zeal for the welfare, temporal and spiritual, of all who are entrusted to his pastoral care?

"The incredulous," writes DAMIRON, "accuse the priest of making a trade of his profession;

of preaching, for his own profit, a faith which he does not believe. This is a great error. . . . The priest is like the people, he believes like the people, he is the people, with the exception of a sentiment more lively, or a study more profound, of the truths of religion. . . . He is more religious than most of men, he becomes the interpreter of public opinion; his existence is a natural fact in society, as is that of every man whose genius and circumstances entitle him to be, in some respect, the representative, and, as it were, the expression of men with whom he lives."

And De Lamennais: "A priest is, by duty, the friend, the living providence of the miserable, the consoler of the afflicted, the defender of the defenceless, the staff of the widow, the father of the orphan, the repairer of all the disorders and evils which your passions and pernicious doctrines engender. His entire life is but a long and heroic devotion to the welfare of his fellow-beings. Who among you would consent to sacrifice, as he does, domestic joys, all the gratifications and pleasures which men so greedily seek after, for the obscure duties, painful labors, and fatiguing functions, the practice of which wastes his heart, and disgusts his senses? While you are still absorbed in profound sleep, that man of charity,

anticipating the aurora, has recommenced his career of benevolent deeds; he has assisted the poor, visited the sick, wiped away the tears of the unfortunate, instructed the ignorant, strengthened the weak, and fortified in virtue souls assailed by the tempest of the passions. After a day spent in the performance of such works, evening arrives, but brings not repose. At the hour when pleasure leads you to the theatre, or the festival, he is called for in great haste: a Christian is approaching his last moments, he is dying, perhaps of an infectious disease; no matter: the good shepherd will not let his sheep expire without soothing his anguish, without surrounding him with the consolations of hope and faith, without praying by his side to that God who died for him, and who gives him, at this instant, in the sacrament of love, a certain pledge of immortality. Such is the true priest—not such as, judging from some scandalous exceptions, your aversion is pleased to fancy, but such as he exists amongst us."

"There is a man in every parish," writes the eloquent LAMARTINE, "who has no family, but is of the family of all the world. Who is called upon as a witness, counsellor, or agent, in all the most solemn acts of civil life: without whom we cannot be born, or die; who takes man from his

mother's womb, and only leaves him at the grave: who blesses or consecrates the cradle, the conjugal couch, the death-bed and the bier: a man whom little children love, venerate, and fear; whom strangers style father; at whose feet Christians come to pour out their most intimate desires, their most secret tears. A man, who is the consoler, by profession, of all the miseries of soul and body, the intermediary between riches and indigence; who sees the rich and the poor rap, by turns, at his door: the rich to give their private alms, the poor to receive them without fear of shame; who, being of no social rank, belongs equally to all classes; to the inferior by the poverty of his life, and often by the humility of his birth, to the higher by his education, knowledge, elevation of sentiments which a philanthrophic religion inspires and commands: a man, in fine, who knows everything, who has a right to say anything, and whose words fall from on high upon the mind and heart, with the authority of a divine mission, and the empire of a faith profound. This man is the Curé. No one can do more good or harm to men, according as he fulfils or neglects his high social mission.

"What is a Curé? He is the minister of the religion of Christ, charged to preserve its dogmas,

propagate its morality, and administer its blessings to the portion of the flock confided to his charge. From these three functions of the priesthood, result the three qualities under which we are about considering the Curé: that is to say, as Priest, as moralist, and spiritual administrator of Christianity among the people. . . .

"As Priest, or preserver of the Christian dogmas, the duties of the Curé fall not within the reach of our examination. Dogmas, mysterious and divine in their nature, imposed by revelation, accepted by faith, that virtue of human ignorance, defy all criticism. The priest is accountable for them, as each of the faithful, to his conscience, and his church, the only authority which he acknowledges. Nevertheless, even here the high intellect of the priest can have a useful influence, in practice, on the religion of the people, whom he instructs. . . . .

"The priest, then, holds in his hands all moral, all reason, all civilization, when he holds that book which he has merely to open and read, and shed around the treasures of light and perfection, of which Providence has given him the key. But, like that of Christ, his teaching should be twofold—by his own life as well as by his words. His life should be, as far as human infirmity will

permit, the practical explanation of his doctrine, a living word! The church holds him up more as an example than an oracle: words may fail if nature has not bestowed on him the gift of eloquence, but the eloquence which all are made to hear, is an exemplary life. No human language is as eloquent or persuasive as one virtue.

"The priest is, likewise, the spiritual administrator of the sacraments of the church, and of the works of his charity. His duties, in this respect, are similar to those which every administration imposes. He has to act with men; he must know men. He deals with human passions, he should deal meekly and delicately, with great prudence and discretion. His ministrations extend to the faults, the regrets, the miseries, the necessities, the wants of humanity: his heart should be filled with tolerance, mercy, meekness, compassion, charity, forgiveness. His door should be always open to those who knock at it, his lamp always burning, his staff always in his hand. He must know nothing of seasons, of distances, of contagions, of heat, of snows, when his duty requires him to carry oil to the wounded, pardon to the guilty, or his God, in the Eucharist, to the dying. Before him, as before God, there are neither rich nor poor, small nor great, but men—that is

brothers in misery and in hope. But if he should refuse his ministry to none, he cannot imprudently offer it to those who disdain or despise it.

"He dies; a stone without a name, perhaps, marks his resting place in the cemetery, near the door of his church. His life is over—the man is forgotten forever! But that man is gone to eternal rest: he did here below what was best to be done: he has continued an eternal dogma; he has formed a link in the immense chain of faith and virtue, and has left to generations to come, a belief, a law, a God."

"Impiety alone," writes DIDEROT, "distils its gall against the celibacy which Christianity counsels in a certain order, for greater perfection. The celibacy that merits such reproaches, and against which it is not lawful to be silent, is that which, says the author of the *Esprit des lois*, is formed by libertinism. . . . . Against this all the rigor of the law should be directed, because, as that celebrated author remarks, it is a rule of nature, that the greater the number of marriages that may be made lawfully, the more corrupt are those that are made. . . . . But in what can the celibacy adopted by Christianity be prejudicial to society? It has deprived society, it is true, of some citizens, but they who are taken from it to

be given to God, labor to form for it virtuous citizens, and to engrave on their hearts the great principle of dependence and submission to them, whom God has placed at their head. It takes from them the cares of a family and civil concerns, only that they may occupy themselves more sedulously in the support of religion that cannot change, or trouble the repose and harmony of the state. Moreover, the blessings which Christianity bestows on society are sufficiently great, and multiplied, to envy it the continency which it imposes upon her ministers, in order that their bodily purity may render them more worthy to approach the places where the Divinity resides. This would be as if some were to complain of the liberalities of nature, because in the rich profusion of grain she produces there are some parts that continue sterile."*

The most celebrated and most correct Protestant historian of modern Germany, surnamed the father of German history, does not hesitate to affirm that "taking all things together, it was to the celibacy of the clergy that we are indebted for all we most prize: intelligence, culture of the mind, and the progress of the human race."†

* *Encyc.* Art. *Christianisme.*

† *Luden. Hist. du peuple Allem, vol.* 8.

"Is Europe a desert," asks CHATEAUBRIAND, "because the Catholic clergy make a vow of celibacy? The monasteries are favorable to society, because the religious, by consuming their produce on the spot, carry abundance into the cabins of the poor. Where were to be seen in France a well-dressed peasantry, and laborers whose countenances bespoke plenty and joy, if not in the rich dependency of some abbey? . . . .

"It appears to be pretty well demonstrated, that there should be men, who, separated from the rest of the world, and clothed with an august character, may, without children, without wife, without the perplexities of life, labor for the advancement of light, the perfection of morality, and the consolation of the afflicted. What miracles have not our priests and religious effected in society, under this three-fold head? . . . This is what we had to answer to the objection of moralists on the subject of the celibacy of the priests."*

* *Génie du Christianisme*, chap. 8.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SUPERSTITION.

Superstition is a false idea of religion; the substitution of vain practices in lieu of the enlightened observances of ceremonies; ungrounded prestiges conjured up from fortuitous circumstances, by a sickly imagination; a blind, erroneous, excessive belief, the mere result of the sentiments of the heart, for the time being, and producing, just as the mind is disposed, fear or respect, and accordingly influencing the external conduct of its votaries.

In all ages of the world, people have been swayed by superstitious influences. Under the empire of polytheism, necromancy prevailed to such an extent, that the priests of the temples sought for auguries in the palpitating entrails of beasts and of their fellow-beings. Even the ancient sages were not free from superstition: Seneca and Pliny believed in dreams and omens. In modern times, there are many individuals ridiculously superstitious, attributing good or bad luck to certain days, certain numbers, and certain accidents.

It is not impossible to be, at the same time, impious and superstitious. Diderot and D'Alembert believed in witchcraft. Hobbes was so afraid of ghosts, that he would not sleep alone. D'Argens would not dine at a table with thirteen persons. Many other philosophers believed in sylphs, gnomes, and all the absurdities of the cabalistic art.

Religion and superstition are so essentially heterogeneous, that there can be no fusion of one with the other. The religion of Christ inspires love, and charity, and condemns all absurd, ridiculous, or revolting practices. "It is impossible," says VOLTAIRE, "to be mistaken with regard to the characters of religion and superstition. The truly religious man will always take as a rule of his conduct the Gospel, that sacred code, that invariable and imperishable law, that truth which cannot deceive him, but which elevates his heart above all human weaknesses. On the contrary, the raving imagination of the superstitious conceals the truth from him, and often causes him to trample sound morality under his feet.

"Religion, you will say, has produced many crimes; call it superstition that has reigned over our melancholy globe; call it fanaticism, the most cruel enemy of the worship due to God. Let us

hold in detestation those monsters who have torn to pieces the breast of their mother. . . . . They are serpents which wind their folds around religion: we must crush their heads, without wounding her, whom they infest and devour."*

Again: "Superstition is the delirium of false piety. Fanaticism is the frenzy of zeal. One is the malady of weak, the other of violent, minds. Both outrage religion, one by its fears and terrors, the other by its fury. Both are the redoubtable enemies of humanity, as well as of Christianity, which, by its nature, is equally removed from the fury of fanaticism, and the imbecile fears of superstition."†

"Before the promulgation of the Gospel," he adds, "the most senseless superstitions had stifled the voice of reason. Superstition that proceeds from men, appeared to triumph over reason, the gift of God. But it is the glory of revealed religion, or the Gospel, to have destroyed all the superstitions of the earth. We must love religion and serve God, in spite of the clamors of hypocrites, in spite of the superstitions which sometimes dishonor his worship. I have always distinguished from religion the miseries which superstition has occasioned. . . . Superstition is to

* Tom. 50. † *Encyc.* Art. Christianisme.

religion what astrology is to astronomy: the very foolish daughter of a very wise mother."*

Rousseau has well remarked, that "we cannot too strongly attack superstition which has troubled society, nor respect, too much, religion that sustains it."†

And Montesquieu: "Superstition debases the mind as much as religion elevates it."

* *Quæst.* Tom. 2. † Tom. 23.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FANATICISM.

FANATICISM is a monstrous, an infernal Proteus, which assumes all sorts of shapes on earth. The fanatic is an unreasonable being, who acts without a single correct idea of religion, but makes her holy name the pretext of his phrenzy. Religion spurns such a man from her communion, and yet, in his awful hallucination, he deems himself actuated by zeal for God's glory, and gives unrestrained vent to his extravagant passions, claiming now the privilege of visions, now the gift of supernatual inspirations, and even of prophecy. He exclaims with the emperor Vespasian : "*I am becoming a God !*"*

The fanatic must not be confounded with the whining hypocrite, who, notwithstanding his protracted prayers, ostentatious alms, and pretended piety, is, in the divine language of the author of true religion, a *whitened sepulchre*, who makes a cloak of religion for the purpose of attaining his ends, and who is thus depicted by the eloquent muse of J. B. ROUSSEAU :

* *Incipio Deus fieri.*

"Honest without, his language full of grace,
Most rigid honor painted on his face,
Humanity appears in all he saith,
And equity, and candor, and good faith:
His lips are filled with flattery's sweetest balm,
His cruelty is amiable and calm,
To Heaven his earnest prayers appear to rise,
His vanity moves on with down-cast eyes,
With ardent zeal injustice marks her works,
Voluptuousness beneath his hair-cloth lurks."

The fanatic takes in their literal sense those words of Christ: *I have not come to bring peace, but the sword*, forgetting that the law of Christ is a law of peace reigning over willing hearts, and not subjugating them by force. It was fanaticism, not religion, that occasioned, for example, the massacre of St. Bartholomew. On that fatal day, as in many other similar circumstances, the great and powerful of the earth made use of religion as a cloak of their policy and ambition, the more effectually to deceive the people, and accomplish their infamous projects. "Alas!" exclaims VOLTAIRE, "we have made even religion subservient to our ruin: but it is not her fault, because she inspires sweetness and patience, and teaches us to suffer and not to persecute." This doctrine is clearly enforced by St. Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy: "But the servant of

the Lord must not wrangle, but be mild towards all men, apt to teach, patient, with modesty admonishing them that resist the truth; if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth."*

Not one passage in the Gospel can be pointed out authorising a Christian to persecute an infidel or skeptic. On the contrary, it commands, that all should be treated with charity and tolerance, and those who wander from the right way should be brought back by patience and mildness. The conscience may be penetrated by persuasion, never by violence. Christ did not say, like Mahomet, *Go, subdue all nations*, but *go, persuade all nations to receive the tidings of salvation, and to love one another*. "Mahomet," says Pascal, "propagated his error by putting to death; Christ established his religion, by causing his followers to sacrifice themselves." Christ *brought the sword*, it is true; but only to be drawn against error and vice, never against individuals: for when Peter rashly used it in the garden of Gethsemani, he was commanded to put it up, for he who uses it must perish by it.

What a contrast between religion and fanaticism! under the influence of the former man re-

* Chap. ii. 24–25.

turns good for evil, and is always meek, indulgent, charitable: he invokes God's mercy on the guilty, and acts in conformity with the saying of his divine master: *I wish not the death of a sinner, but that he be converted and live.* Christianity should be considered in her maxims and precepts, and not in the abuses which wicked men may commit in her august name. "The author of the *System of nature*," writes FREDERICK, King of Prussia, "evinces a dryness of mind and very great unfairness, when he *calumniates* religion by imputing to it faults which it has not. How could he affirm with justice or probability, that religion is the cause of all the evils of mankind? Had he expressed himself properly he would have simply said, that the ambition and selfishness of men use religion for the purpose of troubling the world and satisfying their passions. What is there that can be honestly found fault with in the decalogue! Did the gospel contain but this one precept, do not unto another what you would not wish to be done unto yourselves, we should be obliged to confess that those few words comprise all morality—were not pardon of injuries, charity, and humanity preached by Jesus Christ in his sermon on the mountain?"

And VOLTAIRE: "It would be wrong to at-

tribute to religion the disorders of the civil wars in France. The Prince de Condé wished to divide the kingdom: the Cardinal of Lorraine at the head of his house, wished to obtain the first place, and the Constable of Montmorenci, the enemy of the Lorraines, to preserve his power. The Colignys and other chiefs of the party proposed to resist the houses of Lorraine and Guise; each sought to devour a part of the government—God was their pretext—the fury of domination was their god, and the people were the instruments and victims of their ambition.

Of what consequence are these facts, and so many others true or false? There is but one answer to be given, that is decisive. Those bloody scenes, that fury, that cruelty, *are they commanded or condemned by the Gospel?* Is it from the altar of the lamb that those red hot fire-brands were taken to light the faggots that devoured so many victims,—whose numbers, however, are much exaggerated? The more sincerely we are Christians, the less do we follow nature so prone to violence, and the sallies of passion. They, then, were not Christians, who authorised murder and vengeance. If you wish to resemble Jesus Christ, be martyrs, and not executioners."

"Proud foe, compose thyself, be calm and see,
What should the Christian's death, and duty be.
Behold the difference 'twixt thy gods and mine:
Murder and vengeance are enforced by thine;
Mine when thy arm is raised to lay me low
Bids me to pity, and forgive my foe." *

"Nothing," writes ST. ATHANASIUS, "proves more clearly the *weakness of a bad cause*, as to use violence. The Saviour is so meek, that he contents himself by saying: *if any one wishes to come after me... he who wishes to be my disciple...* And when he comes to any of us, He does not use violence, but strikes at the door, saying: open my sister, my spouse. If the door is opened he enters: if not, he withdraws. For truth is not preached with the sword, or with darts, or by soldiers, but by counsel and persuasion."†

"St. Martin," as VOLTAIRE has remarked, "refused to communicate with those bishops who had demanded the blood of the heretic Priscillian: and openly declared that it was shameful to condemn men to death because they erred."‡ "For, all zeal," in the language of ST. FRANCIS OF SALES, "that is not charitable, proceeds from a piety that is not real."

"It is a crime," again VOLTAIRE says, "not

* *Zaire traged.* † *Letter to the Solitaries.* ‡ Tom. 47.

to seize every opportunity to render fanaticism execrable. . . . I have written against it—but the more inimical I am to that spirit of faction, of enthusiasm, and of rebellion, the more sincerely do I adore a religion whose morality makes one family of the human race, and whose practice is established on indulgence and good deeds. How could I not love religion who have always celebrated it?"*

And in another place: "Germany was the theatre of tragic scenes. Two fanatics named Storck and Muncer, Saxons by birth, wished children to be re-baptised, because Jesus Christ was baptised at an adult age. Hence their apellation of Anabaptists. They professed to be inspired to reform the Roman communion and Lutheranism, and menaced all who should oppose their gospel with death, founding their threat on the words of Christ: *I am not come to bring peace, but the sword.*

"Luther succeeded in arousing Princes, Lords and Magistrates against the Pope and Bishops: Muncer aroused the peasantry against them. He and his disciples addressed themselves to the inhabitants of the country-places of Suabia, Misnia, Thuringia, and Franconia. They developed

* *Lettre aux Académiciens.*

that dangerous truth that lies in the hearts of all, that men are born free. . . .*

" The cruelties we have seen exercised, by the Commons of France and England, in the days of Charles VI, and Henry V, were renewed in Germany, and in a more violent manner. Muncer, in preaching equality, seizes upon Mulhausen in Thuringia, and makes the inhabitants, in preaching disinterestedness, lay their riches at his feet. The peasantry rise, from Saxony to Alsace, massacre the higher classes, and strangle an illegitimate daughter of Maximilian I. . . . . Muncer, who wished to make himself a Mahomet, perished at Mulhausen on the scaffold. Luther took no active part in these excesses, but gave, in spite of himself, the first impulse to them, as he was the first to break down the barrier of submission. . . Blood had not yet flowed in Europe, in Luther's cause. The Anabaptists, transported by their blind zeal, and unintimidated by the fate of Muncer, their leader, desolated Germany in the name of God. Never had fanaticism reached such a pitch. All the peasants imagined themselves prophets, and *they who knew nothing of the*

* Certainly in the words and spirit of our Declaration of Independence, this maxim is true, and we, as Americans stand by it. But Muncer attempted to level all orders and classes; which we do not approve of. Order must reign.

Scriptures, except that they should massacre without mercy, the enemies of the Lord, were the most violent in Westphalia, the land of their stupidity. They took possession of Munster, and banished the bishop. They wished to establish the theocracy of the Jews, and be governed by God alone. But a man named Matthew, their principal prophet, having been killed, a tailor-boy, named John, born in Leyde, in Holland, declared that God had appeared to him and appointed him King. He spoke, and was believed. The pomp of his coronation was magnificent. Coins in his honor, are yet to be seen. His armorial bearings were two swords in the same position as the Keys of the Pope. Monarch and prophet, at once, he sent forth twelve apostles to announce his reign throughout all lower Germany. He had as many as six wives at a time. One of them, for having spoken against his authority, lost her head."

A journal published in Paris, during the sway of infidelity and terror, makes the following avowal: "Every impartial man must acknowledge that religion has ever been guiltless of the wars and other evils imputed to her. What did she say to the primitive Christians? She said: stretch out your necks! In the middle ages,

she said to the Lords: I forbid you to make your vassals fight, at least from Wednesday evening to Monday morning. Seeing that she could not restrain those barbarians, she precipitated them on the common enemy. In the conquest of America, she did not cease to reclaim, by the mouth of Las-Casas, against the cruelties of Pizarro.

Galileo is cited, condemned, and persecuted by the Inquisition, it is said, for having taught the motion of the earth. Happily it is now proved, by the letters of Guiccardini and the Marquess Nicolini, Ambassador from Florence, both friends, disciples, and protectors of Galileo, and by the manuscript letters of the philosopher himself, that the public have, for the space of a century, been imposed upon in this fact. Galileo was not persecuted as a good philosopher and astronomer, but as a bad theologian, taking upon himself to explain the Bible. His discoveries made him, no doubt, many enemies; but it was his stubbornness in wishing to reconcile the system of Copernicus with the Bible that subjected him to censure, and his own petulance was the cause of his chagrin. He was confined not in the prisons of the Inquisition, but in a public edifice, with full liberty to communicate without its walls. In his trials, there was no question of the foundation of his system, but of its reconciliability

with the Scriptures. After the sentence was pronounced and the retractation made, Galileo was free to return to Florence. For these particulars we are indebted to a Protestant, Mallet-Dupan, who, on the strength of original documents, has vindicated, in this case, the court of Rome."*

"Every thing good has been abused," remarks MOLIERE. "It is not, therefore, surprising, that religion has been a cloak to cover the corruption of men. If wretches have abused piety, and have made it subservient to criminal deeds, we must make the necessary distinction, and do not confound, by a false consequence, the goodness of things that are corrupted with the trade of its corrupters."†

We may conclude, then, with MONTESQUIEU, that "it is reasoning badly against religion to amass together in a voluminous work the evils that have been produced when her spirit has been abused, and her maxims have been despised. Were I to rehearse the abuses of institutions the most necessary, I would tell a frightful tale; and certainly, the longer those institutions have lasted, the more easy it would be to accumulate the frightful charges that might be made."‡

* *Mercure du* 17 *Juillet*, 1784, *No.* 29.

† *Preface du Tartuffe.* ‡ *Esprit des lois, liv.* 24.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

WITHOUT morality no one can be either a Christian or a philosopher. Because there is no other proof of the love of revelation or of wisdom. Pagan antiquity, I am aware, boasts of her sages, her Socrates, Plato, Seneca, Cicero, and others: but those illustrious philosophers fell into the grossest errors and were guilty of great immoralities. Whereas, they whose minds and hearts have been illumined by the sublime wisdom of Christianity, have been models of the purest morality.

It were an error to suppose that morality is the effect of education, or of policy. Whatever may be the social condition of man, whether he be fortunate or miserable, he may, by observing the morality of the gospel, obtain true happiness. We do not believe with some superficial moralists, that happiness is ideal; but that it consists in doing good to our fellow-beings, and bending, with resignation and hope, to the dispensations of Providence. Society could not exist without

morality. Why are magistrates appointed? why are laws decreed? why are rewards and punishments proposed? Because men are too apt to follow their reason only; they are naturally disposed to fear and hope; and the founders of nations have thought it important to put this disposition to profit in order to conduct them to virtue and happiness. Morality, without positive precepts, would leave reason without a guide or rule: and morality without religious doctrines, would be justice without tribunals... "Religious ideas" writes PORTALIS, "have contributed more than any thing else to the civilization of men ... Among Christian nations, letters and the fine arts have always formed a gentle alliance with religion: it is religion that, by softening the soul and elevating it to the highest conceptions, has given a fresh impulse to talents. Religion has produced our first and most celebrated orators, and furnished themes and models for poetry; she has given birth to music, directed the easel of the greatest painters, and the chisel of the greatest sculptors, and to her we are indebted for the most beautiful specimens of architecture.

"Could we look upon, as irreconcilable with our lights, and manners, a religion which a Decartes, and a Newton venerated, and which has

developed the genius of a Pascal, or a Bossuet, and has formed a Fenélon?

"In morals, is it not the Christian religion that has transmitted to us the entire body of the natural law? Does not that religion teach us all that is just, holy, amiable.... If the body of a nation, and minds the least instructed, and most simple, are now more enlightened than were formerly a Plato or a Socrates, on the great truths of the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of a future life, do we not owe all these blessings to religion?"

"Eclecticism," says PIERRE LEROUX, "has done great mischief in France: it enchains the mind, and, as Bacon declared, deprives the intellect of its powers. It stifles every religious, social, patriotic sentiment; it throws society and government into a lethargy and supine torpor ... so that of it may be affirmed what Bacon said of skepticism: *our country and humanity cry out against this odious philosophy.*"

"I know not," writes ROUSSEAU, "how the pure morality of our books can be attributed to the progress of philosophy: this morality is borrowed from the Gospel, and was Christian, ere it became philosophical."

And BAYLE: "Virtue and vice are two spe-

cies of qualities, naturally and morally different; morality is an emanation from the sanctity of God; which sanctity is right reason commanding good, and forbidding evil. Anteriorly to the divine law, moral truths imposed certain duties."*

Rollin remarks that "the secret voice of conscience inspires the just with a sweet peace in the midst of the greatest afflictions, and inflicts on the guilty the most cruel torments in the midst of the liveliest joy and the most sensible pleasures."

In confirmation of this point, Rousseau breaks forth into this impassioned and vehement strain of eloquence: "How great soever the number of the wicked, on earth, there are but few of those cadaverous souls that have become insensible, against their interest, to all that is just and good. Do we see in the street, or any public place, an act of violence and injustice, that moment a sensation of anger and indignation is aroused in our hearts, and we feel impelled to take the part of the oppressed. On the contrary, if any act of clemency or generosity strikes our eyes, what love and admiration does it not inspire? It is of very little consequence to us, surely, whether a man has been good or bad two thousand years

* *Tom.* 3.

ago; and yet the same interest affects us in reading ancient history, as if the facts were now passing before us. What do I care about the crimes of Cataline? Am I afraid of becoming his victim? Why, then, have I as great a horror for him as if he were my contemporary. . . . .

"The first duty of men is not to do evil to others: the second is to do good... No one has ever repented for having performed a good action.... No one can be happy who does not enjoy the pleasure of self-esteem. If the true enjoyment of the soul consists in the contemplation of the beautiful, how can the wicked love it in another, without hating himself.... Whoever is more attached to life than his duties, cannot be happy..... There is no pleasure without honor and virtue ... Reason often deceives us, conscience never. It is the true guide of men, it is to the soul what instinct is to the body—conscience is that divine instinct, that immortal and celestial voice, that certain guide of an ignorant and limited being, but a being intelligent and free, that infallible judge of good and evil which renders man like to God."

The Marquess D'Argens informs us, that "Pythagoras prescribed to his disciples to enter into themselves every day, for some moments,

and ask these questions: How have I employed my day? where have I been? what persons have I associated with? what good have I done? what errors have I fallen into?

> Question thy heart; thy good and evil see;
> At once thy judge and thy accuser be.

"The morality of the Nazareans seems to have been dictated by the divine mouth. Good faith, candor, forgiveness of enemies, all the virtues which the human heart can embrace, are strictly enjoined on them: a true Nazarean is a perfect philosopher."*

"Men," writes VOLTAIRE, "are subject to cruel passions and horrible misfortunes. They must, therefore, have a check to restrain, and a truth to console them... The great object, and great interest, it seems to me, is not to argue metaphysically, but to think whether, for the common good of us, miserable and reflecting animals, we should admit a God, the rewarder and avenger, who is, at once, a curb and a consolation; or should reject such an idea, and abandon ourselves to our calamities, without hope, and to our crimes, without remorse.... If the idea of a God, to whom our souls must be re-united, has made men virtuous, those examples suffice for

* *Lettres Juives*, tom. i.

my cause, and my cause is that of all men. . . . The worship of a just God who punishes and recompenses, is necessary for the welfare of society. Men have always had the hope of a future life; hope, it is true, often attended by doubt. Revelation has destroyed that doubt, and ushered certainty into its place. . . . . If men do not believe in hell, what restraint should we have. Since the formation of society, how many guilty persons have escaped the severity of the laws? Public crimes were punished. A check was necessary to prevent secret crimes, religion alone could prove that check. The Persians, Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Greeks, admitted future punishments. Virgil, in the sixth book of the *Æneid*, represents the wretched Theseus condemned to sit forever in pain.

——— Sedet æternumque sedebit
Infelix Theseus . . . .

"The idea of purgatory, as well as of hell, is of the highest antiquity; but is no where so clearly expressed as in the same book of Virgil, in which the greater part of the mysteries of the Gentiles is unfolded:

Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumque malorum
Supplicia expendunt.
Hence are they racked with pains, and expiate
By suffering, their former evil deeds.

This idea is sanctified by Christianity; and it is consoling to believe, that we may, by prayer, obtain favor from God for a departed soul, condemned, in the other life, to temporary punishment."*

And again: "The moral of the Gospel is so pure, so holy, so universal, so clear, so ancient, that it could come only from God . . . No moralist, no philosopher, no legislator, has ever said, or could say, what its maxims proclaim. . . . The true happiness of man is identified with each one of the truths of the Gospel. . . . There is no virtue that it does not inspire. . . . Religion, that true philosophy, elevates courage, at the same time that it makes the heart compassionate. . . . Stoicism has given us but one Epictetus, Christian philosophy has formed a million who were ignorant that they were each an Epictetus; and whose virtue is carried so far, as to make them ignorant of their very virtue. . . . . All the human virtues are to be found among the ancients, I grant: the divine virtues are to be found only among Christians."†

The famous jurist D'Aguessau declares that, "Nothing is more worthy our study and veneration, than the morality which Jesus Christ has

* *Extraits divers.* † *Tomes* 42, 70, 63.

taught. . . . . All the truths of natural religion are there established and developed in a noble and luminous manner: all those that men were ignorant of, or of which they could form a conjecture only, but which it was important they should know with certainty, are announced and sustained by proofs which the human mind cannot resist; and in all those truths there is not one that does not accord with the ideas we have of the Supreme Being; of His goodness and His justice. Its worship is worthy of God, who is its object. Man there learns his origin, his destination, his end; what he owes to his Creator, to himself, to his equals. Man in affliction there finds consolation; sinful and repentant man, words of life and salvation, that reanimate his hopes. Man yearning after happiness, finds there wherewith to fill up his vast desires; by the object proposed to his attention, he finds sage counsels to direct him, powerful aids to support him, and, everywhere, striking examples to encourage him.

"This morality of Christ *is simple;* the vivid and brilliant expression of the pure and sublime virtues of his soul. It is *holy*, dictated by wisdom and justice. *Universal*, proper for all people and all climes. *Complete*, embracing all virtues and condemning all vices. *Uniform*, all its parts are

fitted together, form a beautiful whole, and afford mutual strength.

"Does not a morality so conformable to the nature of man, and, at the same time, so sublime and perfect, merit to be stamped with the seal of divine revelation, to subject to its sway men, whose depravity had reached its acme."

Finally, I will here subjoin the solemn retractation of infidelity, made on his death-bed, by Toussaint, a celebrated philosopher, before receiving the last sacraments.

"My son," he earnestly said, "hear and deeply lay up in your heart, the last words I now address you. I am on the point of appearing before God, and rendering an account of my life. I have greatly offended Him, and stand much in need of His mercy. To obtain this, it would be necessary for me merely to repent and have confidence, my son; ah! doubtless that would be enough, so infinite is God's bounty, had I to reproach myself only with my own weaknesses and faults. But, if I have scandalized and injured others, will it not be requisite that those individuals should intercede, in some sort, for me before God, by pardoning me themselves?

"Well, I calculate still on that act of charity on the part of those who have cause to complain

of me. I have wronged your mother; and her piety, which is well known to me, answers that she will grant me the pardon I implore. I have been guilty of fatal negligence towards your sisters, the second head, on account of which I should be filled with desperate regrets, did I not consider that, at their age, impressions are yet weak, and that your mother will repair the evil by the solid and Christian character she will give them. You, then, my son, are the only subject, in this my dying moment, of my terrible inquietude. I have scandalized you by my conduct, so little congenial with a Christian life, and by my maxims so worldly and false: will you pardon me? Will you do what you can that God may pardon me? Will you not embrace principles different from those which I instilled into your heart? Unfortunately, you are just entering upon an age when there is too great an inclination to forget the wisest counsels. May I flatter myself that you will forget those only which it now so deeply pains me to have given you. Hearken attentively, my son, to the solemn instruction I am giving you, at this critical moment. I call God to witness, whom I am about receiving, and before whom I must soon appear, that if in my conduct, in my conversation, and in my writings, I have shown so little of

the Christian, it was not from conviction, but from human respect, and from the vain wish to please certain persons who were implicated with me.

"If, then, you have any confidence in your father, let that confidence render more respectable in your eyes, what I, this day, declare to you. May you engrave on your heart, and often recall to your memory, the last scene in the life of your father. Kneel down, my son, unite your prayers with those of the persons who surround me, and are looking upon you; promise God that you will profit by my last lessons, and beseech Him to pardon me."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.

As the conclusion of this work, I will add a few general remarks concerning those great Doctors of the Catholic Church, whose names are so familiar to all ecclesiastical readers, and whose authority is so often quoted by controversial writers of all times.

"The Fathers," writes Fenélon, "are the channels of tradition. Through them we discover the manner in which the Church interpreted the Scriptures in all ages. . . . They are our masters.

"They were endowed with the highest genius, possessed of great souls and heroic sentiments; had a marvellous experience of minds and manners: men, in a word, who had acquired a great authority, and a great facility of speaking. They were also very polished; that is to say, perfectly versed in all the elegancies of writing, speaking in public, conversing familiarly, and discharging all the functions of civil life. All these qualifications rendered them very eloquent, and well fitted to gain over men. Thus do we

find in their writings, not merely a polish of words, but of sentiment and manners, not to be found in writers of succeeding ages.

"This polish, so much in accordance with simplicity, made them graceful and insinuating, and produced great effects for religion."

La Harpe says, that "the holy fathers belong, without doubt, in a particular manner, to the Church, but literature claims them likewise, and applauds them for the good they have done for humanity. Literature loves to array herself in the lustre which they have shed through ages: and feels herself authorized to say, that while they were confessors and martyrs, they were great men; and while they were learned, they were also, orators."

"A Father of the Church," exclaims La Bruyére, "a Doctor of the Church! what names! 'What gloom in their writings, what dryness,' cry out they *who have never read them.* It is astonishing how far from the reality is the idea such men have formed of them. They have shewn in their works, more polish, more wit, more richness of expression, more strength of reasoning, more lively traits and natural graces, than can be found in most of the authors of their times, who are read with avidity, and whose

names are immortalized. What a pleasure to love religion, that has been believed, defended, explained, by such noble geniuses, such solid minds: especially when we know that for extent of arguments, depth, penetration, application, developments, exactness of conclusions, dignity of language, beauty of moral and sentiment, there is nothing, for example, that can compare with St. Augustine, but Plato and Cicero."*

And CHATEAUBRIAND: "The eloquence of the Fathers of the Church possesses something inspiring, powerful, royal, thus to speak; whose authority confounds and subdues you. We feel that their mission comes from above, that they teach by the express order of the Almighty. Yet, in the midst of their inspirations, calm and majesty characterize their genius."

I will conclude with the tribute of VILLEMAIN: "What oratorical inspirations have not the Fathers of the Church found in their mission. Approaching nearly the origin of Christianity, they seem to have borne upon their heads the *fiery tongues* of the Apostles. I have often past long nights in turning over the voluminous collections of the doctrine and eloquence of the first ages of Christianity: and I seemed to pore over the mem-

* *Esprit fort.*

ories of the greatest revolution that has ever taken place in the world. A profane reader, I sought in those theological libraries, the manners and genius of nations, the vivid imagination of the orators of Christianity, their combats, their enthusiasm revived to my view a world that no longer exists, and which their language, always active and impassioned, seemed to transmit to me better than history. The most abstract questions were personified by the heat of discussion and the truth of language. All appeared fraught with interest, because all was fraught with sincerity. Great virtues, ardent convictions, characters strongly original, animated this picture of an extraordinary age.

"They are every where. They resist Galerius, they reply to Symmachus, they weep over Theodosius and Valentinian, they defend Christianity before nations that oppose it, they call upon Genseric to spare the human race; in the most deplorable calamities, in the destruction of the empire, they appear in the midst of men, to rescue them from despair, they take upon themselves to console the universe. . . . . The sublimity of their Christian eloquence seems to grow and live, in proportion as everything else decreases and decays. In the midst of the most degrading

circumstances, while an empire is governed by Eunuchs, or invaded by Barbarians, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine proclaim the purest morality, in the highest tones of eloquence. Their genius only soars far above the decadence of the empire; they stand like its founders amid the ruins—and they are, in effect, the architects of that great religious fabric which was to succeed to the glories of the Roman Empire."

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